



Grace Flows
Genesis 21:1-21
Week 11 of 14

In a Leadership Journal article, John Ortberg argues that sometimes stressful and painful situations can actually help us grow. Ortberg creates the following scenario:

Imagine you're handed a script of your newborn child's entire life. Better yet, you're given an eraser and five minutes to edit out whatever you want. You read that she will have a learning disability in grade school. Reading, which comes easily for some kids, will be laborious for her. In high school, she will make a great circle of friends, then one of them will die of cancer. After high school, she will get into her preferred college, but while there, she will lose a leg in a car accident. Following that, she will go through a difficult depression. A few years later she'll get a great job, then lose that job in an economic downturn. She'll get married, but then go through the grief of separation.

With this script of your child's life and five minutes to edit it, what would you erase? Psychologist Jonathon Haidt poses this question in this hypothetical exercise: Wouldn't you want to take out all the stuff that would cause them pain? If you could erase every failure, disappointment, and period of suffering, would that be a good idea? Would that cause them to grow into the best version of themselves? Is it possible that we actually need adversity and setbacks—maybe even crises and trauma—to reach the fullest potential of development and growth?



northeast daily reading

March 20, 2011



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Abraham אברהם

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Ortberg contends that God doesn't always erase all our stress and pain before it starts. Instead, God can use the failures, disappointments, and periods of suffering to help us grow. Ortberg writes, "God isn't at work producing the circumstances I want. God is at work in bad circumstances to produce the me he wants." [*John Ortberg, "Don't Waste a Crisis," Leadership Journal (Winter, 2011)*]

Our Daily Bible Reading for this week will concentrate on some of the the Psalms that deal with human difficulties.

- DAY ONE – Psalm 54
- DAY TWO – Psalm 55
- DAY THREE – Psalm 4
- DAY FOUR – Psalm 91
- DAY FIVE – Psalm 39

Memory Verse:

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)



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