

based on “God’s Jewels” by Joni Eareckson Tada

1. How do we become jewels that glitter and really shine?

Suffering. God gets out His toothbrush and gives our soul a hard scrubbing every now and then. Zechariah 13:9 says, “I will refine them like silver and will test them like gold.” As Joni said, “If you want God’s glory to be your shine, it will be on His terms. His glory will be the glow of His godliness in your life, His patience and perseverance.”

2. “Trouble is the textbook that will teach you who you really are.” What is your natural reaction when you’re in pain? When you’re “squeezed,” what comes out?

Joni said when she’s in pain she implodes and collapses in defeat. If she lets it simmer, without going to God’s Word or turning to Him in prayer, she becomes selfish, impatient, mean-spirited, and peevish.

3. Why is it so important for God to scour away our impurities?

The core of God’s plan is to rescue us from our sin. The Father is heaven-bent on conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ.

4. Do you feel as though someone’s taking a gigantic toothbrush and scrubbing your soul raw today? In what area are you bemoaning the fact that “Things are never going to be the same”?

“God is concerned about your poverty or my pain. He’s concerned about your broken heart or my broken neck, but these things aren’t His ultimate focus. He cares about that stuff, but those things are merely symptoms of the root and real problem.” “My wise and sovereign God takes one form of evil—that is suffering—and He turns it on its head to defeat another form of evil, and that’s my sin, my self-centeredness.” “The hurting and the hammering is not going to end until we become completely like Jesus.”

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5. How can we change? What is Joni's recommended two-step solution to your pain?

"You don't sit in front of a Bible and just hope that it happens to you through osmosis. No, when you obey in small and great ways, that's when you change." First, yield to the chisel. Second, serve and help others.

6. What did you find most encouraging from this message?

Grace abounds where suffering abounds. God's grace, the desire and the power to do His will, the desire and power to obey is sufficient for your pain and problems, because Jesus is your co-laborer. Also, the hammer and chisel will be put away, and just two minutes in heaven will be worth it all. ♀