

# Get Real... “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.”

## HOW WE MISUSE OUR EXPERIENCES.

### 1. We **waste** them.

📖 Galatians 3:4 (NCV) “Were all your experiences wasted? I hope not!”

### 2. We **deny** them.

📖 Philippians 1:12 (NIV) “Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”

### 3. We **overemphasize** them.

📖 Job 32:7-8 (Msg) “I kept thinking, ‘Experience will tell. The longer you live, the wiser you become.’ But I see I was wrong—it’s God’s Spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty One, that makes wise human insight possible.”

📖 1 John 4:1 (NIV) “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

## HOW GOD USES OUR EXPERIENCES

### God will use our **spiritual** experiences to **inspire** others.

📖 1 Peter 3:15b (NIV) “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

📖 Psalm 22:22 (NIV) “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.”

📖 Psalm 66:16 (NIV) “Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.”

📖 1 John 5:10a (NIV) “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart.”

### God will use our **painful** experiences to **encourage** others.

📖 Proverbs 20:30 (GNB) “Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.”

📖 Philippians 1:12–14 (NIV) “Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.”

📖 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 (NIV) “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

## God will use our educational experiences to instruct others.

📖 Proverbs 4:13 (NIV) “Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.”

📖 Proverbs 4:6–7 (NIV) “Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. <sup>7</sup> Wisdom is supreme; therefore, get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”

📖 2 Timothy 2:1–2 (NIV) “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

📖 2 Timothy 3:14a (NIV) “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...”

## God will use our good experiences to remind others.

📖 Psalm 107:8–9 (NLT) “Let them praise the Lord for His great love and for the wonderful things He has done for them. <sup>9</sup> For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

📖 Nahum 1:7 (NLT) “The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in Him.”

📖 Psalm 30:1–5 (LB) “I will praise you, Lord, for you have saved me from my enemies. You refuse to let them triumph over me. <sup>2</sup> O Lord my God, I pleaded with you, and you gave me my health again. <sup>3</sup> You brought me back from the brink of the grave, from death itself, and here I am alive! <sup>4</sup> Oh, sing to Him you saints of His; give thanks to His holy name. <sup>5</sup> His anger lasts a moment; His favor lasts for life! Weeping may go on all night, but in the morning, there is joy.”

**Digging Deeper**—Share a specific way that you’ve seen experience misused. In what way has God used one of your painful experiences to connect with someone else? Name some ways that people learn. What is the most effective way that you learn? How often do you focus on God’s goodness? Would your outlook on life change if you looked at God differently than you currently do? In what way has God used one of your good experiences to encourage someone?