

DON'T WASTE THE PAIN by David Lyons and Linda Lyons Richardson

Some of you may have heard the story of the death of Ian last spring after an 18-month bout with cancer. Ian was the 13 year-old son of my sister Renee and her husband David Lyons. David's sister, Linda, who has lived with cancer for the last 10 years, combined their journals and journeys to co-write the above book published by NavPress with foreword by Larry Crabb. Many of you may have also heard about my recent diagnosis with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma and beginning of chemo treatment on September 10.

It so happened that this book was published and given to me by David the day before I began the chemo. It feels like God's hand-written letter of love written to me. I've included some excerpts that were particularly meaningful.

Living in the moment of our story lifts us into the passion of God's story. The much-needed shift from routine belief to resolute conviction happens when we hear truth that's lived by people we trust.

I easily become content with living a merely human life, living in unloving ways, careless about holiness, unaware of others' needs. On my own I'm cranky, impatient, & harsh. If you experience gentleness from me you know there must be a God.

I don't want this pain to be wasted. Doubt of God's goodness is at the root of original sin. The enemy loves to use trauma to plant lies rooted in emotionally distorted perception of God and life. Decide to give the pain to God and he'll grow peace in you.

God gives us a role in our healing--thru obedience and prayer--but it's not control. God permits what He hates to accomplish that which He loves. It's all Father filtered. When we pray with faith, it's because God has willed it and we have chosen it, so our prayers are a fulfillment of God's will. Both sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are all over the Scriptures, side by side.

The amazing thing about childlike faith is not only that you believe without doubt, but you accept no without question. Otherwise our hearts grow hard and resistant when there are no answers we can comprehend.

After years of walking with God I've come to know too much of Him to turn away now. There is no better port in this storm, but I don't feel as safe here as I once did. Our apprehension to trust God again comes from how we misunderstood what He was telling us. We had clearly heard from Him that He would heal Ian, that he would have a long and fruitful life. But we misunderstood God and we weren't the first. A long line of God's people have done so through history, as recorded in the Scriptures.

I miss Ian badly, but now I have one foot in heaven. Part of me lives there now and my life is tilting, or being set right, by that reality

I began to appeal to God's compassion & sense of what would be good for [others when I prayed for them]. But I winced. That prayer path led to a dead end with Ian. I walk down that path with greater caution now. But I do walk it. My ideas about good have been stunned. Renee's fingers, cut off in a power saw when she was a little girl, still have open nerves under the skin and when she occasionally hits those nerves, the staggering pain can bring her to her knees. So she's careful with that hand, but she uses it. And I'm careful when I pray, but I still pray.

Endurance 101. Longsuffering 202. Perseverance 303. "To this you are called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." 1Pet 2:21

Read the laments of the Bible. Let them coax out of you what needs to come out.