

The Myth of the Magic Wand Susan Landry, LPC

Why, if we are to “pray without ceasing,” did the Apostle Paul ask God only three times to remove the thorn from his flesh? I never understood why he did not keep asking. Finally, I realized that Paul stopped his requests because his prayer was answered: God’s grace was sufficient. God would allow Paul to suffer so that His glory would be made manifest. God utilized trials in Paul’s life, in Job’s life, in Joseph’s life, and in the lives of countless others in order to bring glory to Himself. He allows tribulation in our lives so that He can pour His grace into our woundedness and shine through us. He does it so that we can be molded into the people He wants us to be. If a butterfly emerges from its cocoon prematurely, it is not strong enough to fly. Similarly, if we are magically healed, we miss out on the transformation that occurs on the Potter’s wheel. God uses trials to strengthen us, to depend on Him, and to enable us to be comforters to others.

People seek counseling for many reasons—they may be struggling with an addiction, a marital crisis, grief issues, or job stress. Usually all hope for an easy, quick solution. Counselors are no different in this respect. We want to “fix” people and put an end to their pain. Unfortunately, there is rarely a situation for which a quick fix exists. I often hear clients say that they wish there were an easy way out; they wish their problem could instantly be cured; they hadn’t expected to work so hard. I often find myself saying, “Believe me: if I had a magic wand, I’d use it.” But there is no such thing as a magic wand. In order for healing to occur, one must embrace the process and go *through* the painful valley. One of the difficulties that people encounter in therapy is the fear of change. When the pain of remaining the same hurts more than the pain of change, people are willing to go through the process.

As a counselor, I may not have answers, but I can offer alternatives and assistance. I may not have the solution, but I can offer solace in one’s suffering. I may not be able to heal, but I can offer hope. We have a Good Shepherd who promises to be with us as we walk through the valleys, and we have the Wonderful Counselor present with us in the therapy room.

God doesn’t give us a magic wand, but He gives us an unlimited supply of mercy and grace. He gives us strength when we are weak, an easy yoke when our burden is heavy, His promise to keep us from falling though we stumble. And He uses circumstances to mold us into vessels fit for His use.

