

AFTER THE PAIN

I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:12-13

Years ago, [*The Land Between*](#), a book by Jeff Manion made a big impact on me.

I've been talking much about how we, as friends, could help those who suffer from stigma to overcome their pain. We can do so by following Jesus—by looking to him as an example for how he treated the lepers, the blind, the outcasts of his day.

By opening our hearts to the kind of love God can give us through his son Jesus, we can share that love with those who need it most, especially those the world won't have anything to do with. We can share God's love by accepting them, by being kind, and by listening to them.

God offers hope to those who find healing in this way. Their pain is bound to diminish as we share with them the spiritual food from God's Word, as well as from what we have personally learned from our life with him. There is hope for everyone who believes and clings to God in the midst of their pain and suffering.

When they start feeling better about themselves, it will be like waking to a new dawn. A world of possibilities opens up. How will they now live, with stigma not holding as much power over them?

How will they live as people who believe in themselves and their self-worth. What will they do with their new confidence? Where will the courage they had as they withstood the stigma now take them? What might they contribute?

Chances are that they too will say, along with the apostle Paul, who himself had suffered much, *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."*

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