



# ***REFLECTIONS***

November 29, 2009

**Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NJKV*

## **Healing Pain**

A stiff neck led me there. I needed something to loosen it up and massage therapy was a recommended prescription. So I went. For one hour Lois pushed on sore places in my neck, shoulders, and back. Her strong fingers painfully pushed knots down my muscle fibers, each movement sending shock waves through a mass of nerve endings embedded beneath my skin. Sometimes the pain was intense enough for me to wonder if the treatment was worse than the disorder. The one hour session reminded me that all 60 minute segments do not seem of equal length. This time I had suffered a long one.

With each push the pain increased. With each twist, my body was stretched beyond its capacities. Maybe I should have let my neck remain stiff instead of bearing the torturous treatment to loosen it. Finally time was up. What a relief! I was thankful that my neck was moving freely, and even more thankful that the healing pain had ended. But maybe there was something else I should be thankful for too.

When giving thanks for our blessings we seldom count pain among them. Yet Apostle Paul reminds us to give thanks for *everything*, but whether physical or emotional, pain is seldom on the list. Just as pain was a part of reshaping the muscles in my stiff neck, pain is a part of reshaping the nature of our lives. It begins with what we have become and transforms us into something different and new.

Pain reminds us of our weaknesses, but it also reveals strengths that can bear more than we knew. Pain gives us compassion for the suffering of others, when sympathy might have been the most we could give before. Deep pain follows the loss of loved ones, but the loss reveals the depth of love we felt from their lives and strengthens the love we give to those around us.

The pain Lois induced on me was far from humorous at the time, but it was the kind of pain that we laugh about when it's over. Most pain does not pass away as lightly. Often it seems unbearable. Yet pain is attached to healing. And healing pain transforms what we were before into something different and new. And there is something else.

Our Lord Jesus suffered a painful death that we might have life. Through His healing pain we are made different and new.

*So, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

*"You are the light of the world."*

*Richard* +

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