Clarion Review

Religion

Getting Processed: Recognizing and Surviving Cycles of Spiritual Growth

Jim Hill
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Many well-known preachers have written books expounding their views on how Christians should handle difficult times in their lives. While these thoughts may be helpful, they can seem like trite phrases of encouragement from some authority figure who may not really be exposed to what the typical layperson is experiencing in today's world.

That is one of the refreshing aspects of Getting Processed. Author Jim Hill writes from the perspective of a fellow traveler on life's journey who can easily relate to the twists and turns and ups and downs his readers encounter. He was laid off from his job in 2009, saw his life's investments vanish when his home's value crashed, and often wondered how he would support his family.

Hill uses the story of King Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 32 to illustrate that difficult events facing Christians are simply part of God's process of forming believers to be more like Him. He breaks up the story into easily-digestible, small pieces and builds upon each segment as he heads for the climactic conclusion.

According to Hill, there are three levels to the process of improving one's relationship with Jesus Christ. On Level One, the focus is on facing the challenge. Just as King Hezekiah was confronted with the very real threat of an invasion and likely conquest from the powerful armies of King Sennacherib, modern Christians must recognize their problem and prepare to take a stand against it through their faith in God. Hill briefly interrupts his story line to point out the leadership traits of King Hezekiah. Actually, it doesn't seem like an interruption at all, but rather like a favorite uncle taking a few minutes to point out an underlying theme that may easily be overlooked.

Level Two emphasizes how the process reveals the truth believers must understand: they should rely on God and not themselves. The Israelites had little chance of defeating the invaders

if they planned on making a stand based on their own power. By acknowledging that they would only survive by depending on God, King Sennacherib's forces were totally demolished. Likewise, anyone relying on his own power to overcome life's challenges will soon find he is grossly overmatched.

Level Three is an encouraging reminder that although a Christian might view himself as a flawed, failed, or unimportant person, God sees him as a precious, valuable child who He is shaping to form into a masterpiece. The story of Hezekiah demonstrates how God uses difficult situations to strengthen His people.

Hill makes his points clearly and succinctly in this short book. He skillfully weaves the biblical story with real-life examples and comes across as friendly and compassionate without being preachy. Getting Processed gives the insight, encouragement and hope so desperately needed in today's world.

Jeff Friend