

## Why Am I A Nail

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The only thing the nail knows is what it is like to be pounded, pulled, bent and abused by something much larger than him. His whole design is submission to the will and desires of something else. He has no choice in where he is placed and no choice about his destiny.

Some nails are pounded into beautiful pieces of wood and great attention is given to their appearance. Other nails are spent in rough timber to be supporting pieces of a greater frame. The unlucky nails are bent from the careless efforts of the master, pulled and discarded. If the master chooses, he will leave the bent nail in the wood as a misshapen piece of metal.

Nails come in different shapes and different sizes. Some are used in wood while others find use in cement, tile or metal. Each nail is designed for a specific use and when used properly will greatly enhance the beauty and structure of the master's design. But the nail has to wonder about the hammer.

I like what A.W. Tozer wrote about "The Hammer & The Nail." He writes, "The hammer is a useful tool but the nail, if it had feeling and intelligence, could present another side of the story. For the nail knows the hammer only as an opponent, a brutal, merciless enemy who lives to pound it into submission, to beat it down out of sight and clinch it into place. That is the nail's view of the hammer, and it is accurate except for one thing: The nail forgets that both it and the hammer are servants of the same workman. Let the nail but remember that the hammer is held by the workman and all resentment toward it will disappear. The carpenter decided whose head shall be beaten next and what hammer shall be used in the beating. This is his sovereign right. When the nail has surrendered to the will of the workman and has gotten a little glimpse of his benign plans for its future, it will yield to the hammer without complaint."

The hammer is merciless when it pounds the nail. Its sole purpose is to drive the nail deep and any wrong move by the hammer could mar the nail. When the nail looks at the hammer, it only sees the head coming swiftly down and striking with great force. With the right view of things, the nail understands the purpose of it all and gladly fulfills his role in the scheme of things.

Man is rather like the nail. We are small in the scheme of things. Man considers himself to be great because in his own world he gains greatness. The reality that God shows to man is that while he may have dominion over the world, God still rules in the affairs of men.

David wrote in Psalm 8:1-9, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth, who set your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength, because of your enemies, that you may silence the enemy and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that

pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!"

It is often that we forget that we should yield ourselves to the loving care of our Heavenly Father. We feel as if the whole world is coming down upon us and we wonder if our Father knows and cares. Like the nail, we may view life and events of our life as only brutish and without mercy. Our challenges make us face ourselves before God and cause us to consider our place before Him. When we fully surrender our will to Him, He makes us into beautiful creations. Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of your hand."

The value of Life is not seeking to understand all that is before us today. The nail is only part of a greater creation. We are part of a greater creation that will only find its fruit in eternity. When man seeks to find peace and consolation within himself and by himself, he will find only misery. True happiness and peace can only come from above. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James 1:17, 18)

James shows that it is by "His own will" the nail should understand the will of God. Sometimes we are used as finishing nails to decorate a great work of God. At different times we are penny nails used to support the beams and trusses of life. Some wood is soft and other wood is hard. We have to be "tough as nails" to break through cemented minds of prejudice, apathy and despair. God is working with us in so many ways to accomplish his will.

At times we are pulled from our place, reshaped and used somewhere else. In the hands of the master carpenter, we are used in glory wherever we are placed. We may be a penny nail to hold a support while the beautiful finishing nail is used to support a grand work of art. No one can see the penny nail that gives the strength to the work of art. It is covered by beautiful works of art that shed radiance to those who see it. Hidden beneath are the penny nails that become the steel of the velvet. Without the strength of the penny nails the finishing nails would fail and the great work of art will decay.

In the work of the Lord, there are many "penny nails" – individuals of strength who hold the hearts and minds of so many. Others take their place as finishing nails while other fastens the structure firmly to cement. Every nail is important and so are you! Whether you are misshapen, small, skinny, tall or large or whatever shape you may be as numerous as nails – you are important to the complete work of God.

God sees what each nail can bring to the strength and beauty of his work. The talents of Matthew 25 show that the Lord was not as concerned about the amount of talents but the work of the talents. The one talent man was not the five or ten talent man but God wanted him to do his best as he was. He failed in this and was rejected by God. We may be a small finishing nail or we may be a large penny nail – we all can do glorious things in the hands of God.

Why am I a nail? To be a nail is to serve the master's hand. Solomon looked at life to find its meaning and came to this conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil." The very existence of life is for man to serve God.

The master that man serves is not an unmerciful God. The master carpenter that holds sway over the nail is one of love and compassion. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life...For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ dies for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8)

Peter reminds us that God does not desire anyone to perish “but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) The nature of God is one of severity and compassion: “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in his goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.” (Romans 11:22)

When the nail completely surrenders his will to the Master, God is able to create a “new creature” one that is fit for heavenly things. “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

It is difficult for the nail to see the complete picture of the Master’s creation. In faith he becomes a part and knows “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:16) The result of every nail doing its part is for the growth of the body of Christ and the edifying of the church in love.

Jesus promised to build his church in Matthew 16:18. The building of this church is fulfilled when every Christian yields his life to the service of the Lord. The strength of the church is found in every person adding his life to the diligent work of the kingdom. How blessed we are to be in the hands of such a wonderful Master – a Master Carpenter from Nazareth.