



*Finding  
Biblical Joy  
in the Midst  
of Trials*

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*“The (biblical) joy of the Lord is my strength...” Nehemiah 8:10*

When I was in my 40’s, I remember suddenly being struck with the reality that I was no longer considered to be “young”! My children were in their teens, and I watched as many of my peers started to become weighed down and discouraged as they faced different struggles with their children and life got harder. I also observed some older than me as they settled into becoming set in their ways, discouraged, and bitter because of what life had handed them. Some have even walked away from their faith.

As the years have gone by, I have seen more and more people my age or older giving in to discouragement. Life has gotten more challenging, and they are no longer the zealous, vibrant believers they once were.

I vowed not to allow this to happen as I got older.

Then life took a turn for my family and me, and we began a long journey of very difficult, life-changing circumstances. I found myself battling depression and anxiety, wondering what my purpose in life was. Then, I began to understand why so many of my peers, and those who are older, might struggle and give up. Still, I was determined to fight!

I desperately wanted to know how to persevere in my faith in a way that would shout to those around me that God is faithful and that he is enough, even when life gets harder and harder!

It’s been over ten years, and I am now approaching my 60th birthday. I have been on a quest to learn, experience, and live out what it means to have biblical joy, regardless of my circumstances. I don’t want to be that older person in the church who has become bitter and has given up (even though I have a deeper understanding of why some might end up making that choice.) I want to fulfill the calling that is given to the older generation – to proclaim to the younger generation that God is faithful.

- Psalm 145:4 -

*“One generation shall commend your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.”*

So what can we do to prevent ourselves from giving up as we get older? What can we do so that we don't give in to discouragement as life gets harder? (and it will!) We must learn to focus on the only stable thing in this life – God-the provider of all things. The enemy of our soul has a full-time job to try to get our focus off the One in whom biblical joy is found.

- 1 Peter 5:8 -

*“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls  
around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

Biblical joy is found when we focus on our God, which needs to be a daily choice we make no matter what season we find ourselves in. We must learn what the Bible says about God, who he is, and His promises. We must learn to do the next thing and persevere even when life is hard.

I love how it is worded at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org): “James tells us in chapter 1 that the Christian who perseveres in godliness and the spiritual disciplines will be blessed in the very act of persevering. The more we persevere in the Christian life, the more God grants His blessings upon us, thereby enabling us to continue to persevere. The psalmist reminds us that there is great reward in persevering in the Christian life. In keeping God's commandments, there is “great reward” for our souls (psalm 19:11), peace of mind, a clear conscience, and a witness to the world more eloquent than many words.”

Biblical joy is not something that comes and goes; our circumstances do not dictate it. Biblical joy is something that exists even when we are suffering or going through a heavy trial because it is based on the knowledge that God is present, walking with us in our trials, producing good fruit in us as we go through the hardship, and will use it as a platform for him to be seen by others.

- James 1:2-4 -

*“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

Life is good — but life is hard. We are in a battle with the enemy of our souls!

- Ephesians 6:12 -

*“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Learning about and clinging to God’s promises is the key to finding biblical joy and is the only way that we will be able to persevere in our faith.

- Psalms 145:13

*“For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. The Lord always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does.”*

This will enable us to become that older saint who can proclaim God’s faithfulness to those around them because they have experienced a deep walk with God as he has accompanied them through their heavy trials of life.

- Psalm 100:5 -

*“For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”*

This is the introduction to a series of articles on biblical joy. Join me as I look at some of the struggles we all face and how to find biblical joy in these circumstances.

**A few of the struggles  
we will look at:**

- How to find joy in loneliness
- How to find joy when life doesn't look like you thought it would
- How to find joy when you face depression
- How to find joy in grief
- How to find joy in the daily grind
- How to find joy when a child rebels
- How to find joy when the church disappoints you
- How to find joy when your health fails
- And more!

**Together we will  
learn how to:**

- Find joy as we focus on God and who He is (God's character qualities and who He is.)
- Find joy as we give thanks for all He has done and all the ways that He has been faithful.
- Find joy as we focus on God's promises in His Word. (Promises for the future)
- Find joy as we focus on His temporal provisions. (The provision of all our needs)

I pray that, together we will learn and experience what James 1:2 promises:

*"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."*

And that we will choose biblical joy, one day at a time, so that we can persevere in our faith and "be a witness to the world more eloquent than many words"!



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Battle Depression

*“The most widely divergent sorrows may all be taken to the foot of the cross and find there cleansing, peace, and joy.”*  
- Elisabeth Elliot

A few years ago, the word “Joy” became my word after God had ushered my family and me into a season of some very difficult circumstances. It happened one night when I couldn’t sleep. I quietly tiptoed out to our living room, sat on the couch, and wrapped myself in a warm blanket. The only light in the room came from 3 letters that sat on a shelf: “J-O-Y.”

As I sat there, I reflected on what a difficult season we had found ourselves in: the loss of a ministry that we had been in for 25 + years, the loss of both of my husband’s parents, who were our biggest support system and cheerleaders, parenting two adult children, and the entrance into the new and mysterious world of anxiety and depression. Little did I know that it was only the beginning and that we had been thrust into a very long season of unknowns.

That night I knew God wanted me to learn His definition of joy. Not merely intellectual knowledge of the definition. No. That’s not what He wanted for me. He wanted it to be my heart and soul, down deep experience. He wanted me to experience joy.

I came to the end of every resource I had been clinging to and was forced to sit alone before the Lord. He opened my eyes to the fact that I often find joy in the blessings that He has provided for me more than in HIM - the Provider of the bless-

## James 1:2-4

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

ings. I needed to begin the process of learning what it meant to find joy in Christ alone.

Biblical joy is not something that comes and goes; our circumstances do not dictate it. Biblical joy is something that exists even when we are suffering or going through a heavy trial because it is based on the knowledge that God is present, walking with us in our trials, producing good fruit in us as we go through the trial, and will use it as a platform for him to be seen by others. (Excerpt taken from “Everyday Prayers for Joy”)

There are seasons when I find myself feeling exhausted, and I battle depression. Yes. I have so much to be grateful for. I practice thanking God for the things I have to be grateful for regularly. I trust God’s Word, spend time in it daily, and cling tightly to the truths I read. I battle depression, yet I have biblical joy because I am clinging to what I know about God and His promises. I am choosing to do the next thing. I persevere because He enables me to move forward even when life is hard.

The only stable thing in this life is God-the Provider of all things. The enemy of our soul has a full-time job to get our focus off of the One in whom biblical joy is found. Biblical joy is found when we focus on our Provider, which needs to be a daily choice we make no matter what season we find ourselves in.



## Verses to Find *Biblical Joy* When You Battle Depression

- Colossians 3:2 -

*“Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth.”*

When we shift our focus from our circumstances to God and His promises, we will find ourselves becoming hopeful and encouraged as we remember there is more to this life than what we are experiencing in the present.

- 2 Corinthians 4:18 -

*“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*

When we remember all that God has waiting for us for eternity, we can have joy even when we are tired, have a heavy heart, or battle depression. There is so much waiting for us that will not fade away!

- Psalm 146:3-5 -

*“Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.”*

When we choose to place our hope in God and not in the things and people around us, we are settling into a relationship that cannot and will not hurt us or fail us in any way.

- James 1:12 -

*“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”*

Clinging to James 1:12 is like clinging to a life raft that God throws out to us when facing difficulties and hard times – even depression! With the help of God, we can persevere, and he promises (His promises are the life raft! The hope! The joy!) that we will be rewarded!



## What Good Comes from Battling Depression?

It can be a time when you learn to cry out to God in a new way, acknowledge your weakness, and get to know Him more deeply. You will grow in your need and dependence on Him for strength.

You are given an opportunity to look to him for guidance on what you need to do to deal with your depression. You can ask for wisdom to know what has brought you to the point of being depressed and ask him if it is something physical or something circumstantial. You can ask Him to lead you to the right source for the help you need. Then you will be able to see how creatively he answers our prayer.

You will become more sensitive to others who might struggle with depression and see how God uses your difficult time to help others.

### Find *Biblical Joy* in Depression by Focusing on God in Prayer

#### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being YAHWEH-SHALOM - "The Lord Our Peace. Thank you for promising that I will find peace when I look to you, even in my hardest circumstances, even in depression. You will meet me where I am, provide peace, and guide me to the right place for help.

#### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Thank you for how faithful you have been in the past. I have had seasons of depression, and you were faithful to bring me through those seasons and provided all that I needed. You surrounded me with supportive people and even led me to doctors who could look deeper and find out why I was struggling. You have made me more like you through this struggle. I am so thankful!

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Thank you for your promises that give me hope in my depression. Thank you for Psalm 34:18, which tells me that you are near to the brokenhearted and that you save the crushed in spirit. Thank you for going before me, for being with me, and that you will never leave me (Deuteronomy 31:8). Because of your promised strength, I know that I will be able to persevere (Philippians 4:13). I acknowledge you and trust in you, and know that you will make my path straight, leading me through this time.

#### Thank Him for His Provisions

Thank you for how you have provided for me. For my supportive family and friends, for doctors that can give help, insight and counsel, and for your Word that brings comfort and biblical joy!



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Battle Anxiety

*“If I peer anxiously into the fog of the future, I will strain my spiritual eyes so that I will not see clearly what is required of me now.”*

*- Elisabeth Elliot*

Anxiety.

If you are human, you have felt anxiety in some way! You may be facing a season of trial, peering into a future of unknowns, or feeling as if your life has spun out of control. All of this can contribute to a person experiencing anxiety. Or maybe you have experienced a different kind of anxiety – intense anxiety that doesn’t just go away when you direct your thoughts elsewhere. It could be that you have experienced some loss or trauma that has triggered something in your body, and you deal with a deeper level of anxiety on a regular basis.

I have experienced both kinds of anxiety – the kind that can be calmed by redirecting my thoughts and the kind that affects me physically, even when I redirect my thoughts. Both are difficult to navigate, and both happen because we live in a sin-cursed world, and our minds and bodies are altered because of that sin.

## Verses about Anxiety in the Bible

- *Philippians 4:6* -

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

We can go to God with our anxiety, no matter what level we are experiencing, and offer it up to Him. Even if the ‘feeling’ of anxiety doesn’t go away, we can still offer it to him and walk in faith. If you experience the kind of anxiety that is based on more than immediate circumstances – more of an overwhelming physical anxiety - He can help you with that. He will lead you to the right source for help to calm whatever is physically happening in your body so that you can think clearly emotionally.

- *1 Peter 5:6-7* -

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

Again, all our anxiety can be heaped onto his great, strong, almighty shoulders. He is God. He can take it all and walk you through it. He cares for you. He will direct you, one step at a time, to a place of peace.

- *Philippians 4:13-14* -

*“I can do all things through him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.”*

We can face our anxiety and even conquer it with the help and strength of God. Whether it is the kind of anxiety that goes away with redirecting your thoughts to God and His promises or the type of anxiety that you wake up with and you can’t put your finger on why you even feel that way. He is able to help you get to a place of peace. He can direct you to the right place, whether it is a passage in the Word or a person who can help strengthen you spiritually or physically; He is able to see what you need and strengthen you as only He can.

## What Good Comes from Battling Anxiety?

Anxiety is the way your body or mind tries to get your attention. It can be used for good if it points out an area where you need to lean on God and direct your attention to Him instead of a difficult circumstance you are facing. It can be used to help you see that there is something you need to deal with by going to a pastor or counselor. Anxiety can indicate that we need to notice or care for something in our lives. God knows exactly what you need in order to get past the type of anxiety you might be experiencing.

Whenever you suffer in some way, you automatically gain the ability to understand that suffering when another person goes through it. Anxiety is a form of suffering that we, as weak human beings, will experience in one way or another. If you allow it to, your experience with anxiety can make you a more empathetic person and able to be used by God to help others when they face anxiety. I am so thankful for how God has used anxiety in my life, especially how he has allowed me to come alongside others. God has connected me with people who experience a similar type of anxiety that I have experienced. Because of that, I have been able to help them find relief. I love that!

When we look to God for help in our anxiety and get on the other side of it, we exercise our spiritual muscles. We have learned what it takes to get through the overwhelming feeling of anxiety, and we are more prepared for what we might face in the coming days. I have been motivated to study the Word more so that I know what promises to cling to when I feel overwhelmed with anxiety, but I also feel more equipped to understand where to go for help when I experience the physical, debilitating anxiety that sometimes comes over me. I feel ready to face both types of anxiety because I've gone through it and been led by God to the other side.

## Find *Biblical Joy* When Battling Anxiety by Focusing on God

### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-Shalom—The Lord Our Peace. There is no feeling that we face, whether it be fear, being overwhelmed, or anxiety, that you cannot walk us through and give us peace. You can direct us to your Word that we can cling to, and that will calm us when we have anxiety about our circumstances. You are able to direct us to the help we need if we experience a physical or chemical problem in our body or mind that causes us to experience anxiety. You are our Peace.

### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that tell me you will never leave me, that you are always present, that you see all of my suffering, and that you walk with me through all that I face. Thank you that I can cling to those promises and that they give me hope and peace.

### Thank Him for His Provisions

Father, thank you for your provision that has helped me get through, and deal with, seasons of anxiety. Thank you for your Word that comforts me, your people who come alongside me and help to bear my burdens, and for counselors and doctors that you have equipped to help with the more complicated suffering in this life. You are so good to us. You are the Lord our Peace.

### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being faithful. You have walked me through so many seasons of anxiety in the past, and I know you will be there for me when I need you to walk me through it again. I know I can count on you. I am so grateful!



# How to Find Biblical Joy When Your Heart Is Broken

*“God never denies us our hearts desire except to give us something better.  
A broken heart is a reminder of our only source of power.”  
- Elisabeth Elliot*

If you are alive, you have more than likely experienced rejection, betrayal, or heartbreak. It doesn't take long for that to happen, does it? It can begin in early childhood, follow you through middle and high school, and happen throughout your adult life. You might experience a friend walking away from your relationship without explanation, or someone you loved did not feel towards you in the same way. Maybe someone has given you the “silent treatment” or influenced others negatively, and they believe something about you that is not true.

The heartache that comes with any of these scenarios is intense and can feel as if your heart is breaking. I've faced my own times of heartbreak, and I know that it can feel overwhelming and leave you wondering if you will ever get over the pain. It can make you wonder if you ever want to trust again.

Unfortunately, when we open ourselves up to one of God's greatest gifts, loving another person, we also put ourselves at risk. When we love, we risk being hurt because there is always a possibility of eventual loss. We can't have one without the other.

## Verses to Help You When Your Heart Is Broken

- Psalm 34:18 -

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*

The Lord is near. The Lord saves. Those realities won't take the pain of heartbreak away, but they will comfort you when you realize you aren't alone in it. God sees what is happening and wants us to pour out our hearts to him. He wants to pull you onto his lap and comfort you, as a Father does for his own child. If you are hurt, he is hurting too. He wants to comfort you.

- Psalm 73:26 -

*“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”*

I have often said that I don't know how people make it through this life without a relationship with God. It is my relationship with God that keeps me persevering in this life. It gives me the strength to keep going when everything inside me wants to quit. He truly wants to be the strength of your heart and your portion (your security and your hope) forever.

- Revelation 2:14 -

*“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

This verse gives us hope that our heartbreak will not last forever. Yes, it will fade while we are still living, but we have a greater hope! We know there is a day coming when there will be no more tears, death, mourning, crying, pain, or heartbreak. All those things will have passed away. We can persevere, even when our heart is breaking because we know there is an end and that he will walk us through it all until we reach eternity.



## What Good Comes When Your Heart Is Broken?

What good did the person bring to the table? You can reflect on the lost relationship and ask God to show you the good that was there, what you learned from the season you spent with that person, and what you can take away from the relationship that might benefit you in the future. You might even end up feeling grateful that this person was in your life because of the positive things they brought with them or the things you learned.

Grow from the experience. As you process your heartbreak, in light of Scripture, you can get to the other side with a stronger faith and a knowledge that God is able to heal your heart and that he enables you to move forward in hope, even when there are times that you feel you may never get over the heartbreak. You can then use your heartbreak experience to better understand another person's suffering, point them to God, and share all that God did for you during your heartbreak.

Learn from the heartbreak. Ask God to show you what he wants you to learn from the ended relationship. What good things did you experience and learn from? What negative things did you experience and learn from? Was there some weakness in your character revealed when the relationship ended? How will it impact your future relationships? You can come away from this experience a stronger, more sensitive to the Spirit person and with a hope that you will be better equipped to be used by God in whatever relationships he brings to you in the future.

## Find *Biblical Joy* by Focusing on God

### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-Rapha, “The Lord Who Heals.” You heal both body and soul and comfort and heal my heart when it breaks. You tell me you understand because you have also had your heart broken. You hold me up, and you make me new. You use all that I go through for my good and your glory. Thank you.

### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that inform me of who you are and all you have for me here and in eternity. Those promises enable me to persevere, knowing there is healing and rejoicing in my future. Thank you for your promise that tells me that there will be a day when there will be no more tears or pain. No more heartbreak!

### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being a faithful God. I am so thankful that you are there, and I can count on you to walk me through even the hardest of times and that you will bring healing to my heart. Thank you that I now have something else to share with others about your faithfulness. Please use my experience to help another member of your body to know you better and to be comforted in their season of heartbreak.

### Thank Him for His Provisions

Thank you for providing me with friendships and enabling me to love others. Even when those relationships don’t turn out how I wish they would have, I know you are in control. Help me to learn all that you want me to learn from this situation. And enable me to praise you for all you are doing in and through me because of it. Thank you that, even when my heart is breaking, you provide the strength I need to not give up and be open to future relationships.



# How to Find Biblical Joy in Loneliness

*“The pain of loneliness is one way in which he wants to get our attention. We may be earnestly desiring to be obedient and holy. But we may be missing the fact that it is here, where we happen to be at this moment and not in another place or another time, that we may learn to love Him - here where it seems He is not at work, where He seems obscure or frightening, where He is not doing what we expected Him to do, where He is most absent. Here and nowhere else is the appointed place. If faith does not get to work here, it will not work at all.”*

*- Elisabeth Elliot*

Loneliness is something we all experience. In fact, I would guess that most of us experience loneliness on a regular (daily?) basis. I have gone through long periods where I have lacked any fellowship, and I have had times when I was in a large group of people, feeling like I didn't fit in anywhere -- again, feeling lonely.

There have been specific seasons of life when I felt lonely: When many of my friends were getting married, and I hadn't met my spouse yet, when I had an infant and wasn't able to come and go as I pleased, when life revolved around a toddler's nap schedule, when I was homeschooling my children who required me to spend most of my time at home, when my children were in college and were no longer in our home as much, and now that my children are married, there is some loneliness in my empty nest.

No matter what season of life we are in, we will face loneliness. Even when we have a strong community at church or are fortunate enough to have family close by, loneliness hovers over each of us. There is no way to escape it.

## Examples of Loneliness in the Bible

*Jeremiah* - the weeping prophet had a lonely calling. He was forbidden to marry, so he had to answer his calling without human companionship. His message, which was a message of repentance, often put him in a position of being rejected by those he was called to preach to.

*David* - experienced grief and loneliness when his own son rose up against him. He was forced to leave his home and family and his home city. He was driven to the point of being so alone that his only choice was to cry out to God. (Psalm 25) Indeed, his only hope was to be found in God.

*Elijah* - Elijah had to run for his life when he was called to prophesy against Ahab, proclaiming that God would send a drought. He ended up in the wilderness and in exile, where, even though God met his physical needs, he was alone. He ended up staying in a widow's home but was a stranger in the town.

*Jesus* - the cross was where the ultimate example of loneliness was experienced. The cross is where Jesus hung and died while crowds of spectators stood back and watched, choosing to do nothing. Of course, this was all a part of God's plan of salvation, but the suffering Jesus experienced was excruciating. He experienced physical and emotional pain so that we would have the hope of eternal life with him in heaven.

Even when we are doing the will of God, we cannot be guaranteed that we will not experience loneliness. It is unavoidable in this sin-cursed world. Whatever our circumstances, we only have one guarantee – we always have the sweet, comforting fellowship of Jesus. That is the only thing that is constant, never fails, and never leaves us. Proverbs 18:24 tells us that He is “a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Matthew 28:20 tells us that He will be with us always, even until the end of this age.” Even in the loneliest of times, we can take comfort that He is always near.

## What Good Comes From Loneliness?

Personally, I believe that loneliness is a form of suffering. And what does the Bible say about suffering?

1 Peter 5 tells us that “the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” He is making you strong and steadfast!

Isaiah 53 tells us, “when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

He is with you. He will not allow you to be overwhelmed.

And Psalms 119 reminds us, “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.”

It can be used as an opportunity for us to learn more about God and His Word.

This suffering, called loneliness, brings us to a point of desperation so that we have nothing left to do but turn to the only One who is always present and ready to fellowship, refresh, and restore us in a way that no human could ever do. We can find biblical joy when we experience isolation and loneliness because it puts us in a position of having nowhere else to turn but to God. And it is only when we are focused on Him that we can experience true, biblical joy.

## Find *Biblical Joy* in Loneliness By Focusing on God

### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for Your promises in Your Word that I can cling to in these lonely days. Thank you for Deuteronomy 31:6, which says, “You will neither fail you nor abandon me.” Joshua 1:9 tells me that “you are with me wherever I go.” And Psalm 94:14, which tells me, “You will not abandon me – your special possession.”

### Thank Him For Who He Is

Father, thank you for being El Roi: The God Who Sees Me. Thank you for understanding what it’s like to be lonely and for not overlooking me, even when it feels like others overlook me. Thank you for Your ever-watching eye, and that I can count on You to be there whenever I need you. I am lonely. Thank you that I am not alone.

### Thank Him For His Provisions

Father, thank you for how You have provided for my every need. You have provided for my physical and temporal needs. (List His provisions as they come to mind) You created the world and provide for every living thing (Philippians 4; Matthew 6), including me! You have promised that You will not allow me to go without.

### Thank Him For His Faithfulness

Father, Thank you for how you have been faithful in the past (take time to reflect and remember how He has been faithful) and how you have sustained me and enabled me to persevere, one minute at a time, one day at a time, up until this moment. Thank you for walking me through my suffering (remember specific trials and suffering that He has walked you through) and for being present. You have provided much-needed human fellowship in the past (remember the people God has brought into your life for fellowship), and I know you will provide that again. I know you are faithful. Thank you for being a faithful God who sees me and provides for my every need.



# How to Find Biblical Joy

## When Life Doesn't Look the Way You Thought It Would

*“God never withholds from His child that which His love and wisdom call good. God’s refusals are always merciful -- “severe mercies” at times but mercies all the same. God never denies us our hearts desire except to give us something better.”*

*- Elisabeth Elliot*

I have described it as feeling like I crashed; in the same way a computer crashes, and all of the data is lost, you have to start over from scratch and rebuild. That’s what happened to my husband and me when the ministry we had been working with for over 25 years suddenly shut down. We had imagined ourselves growing old doing what we had been doing. It felt like the perfect fit for us because all of our gifts were being used.

We crashed. We had to start over from scratch. We had to rebuild. God had different ideas for us than what we had held for ourselves. At first, we felt lost. We had to choose to put one step in front of the other and trust that God would direct us. I battled anxiety and depression, and we wondered what our purpose in life was. Those were hard days. Nothing felt right.

It took a while, but God slowly showed us a new way to live – His plan for us. He opened new doors and gave us new opportunities. Opportunities that we would not have had if what we planned for ourselves had worked out. Doors that we would have never thought to even consider knocking on if He hadn’t intervened. But most importantly, we know Him better because of our crumbled plans. We have a deeper walk with Him because He allowed our hearts to be broken and taught us what it means to focus on Him regardless of our circumstances.

Life does not look how we thought it would in this season of life. It has taken time, but we can see that the fruit that has been produced in us because of the painful change of direction that God has taken us on is much sweeter and more useful than it would have been if He had not changed our plans.



## Verses in the Bible That Talk about God's Plans

- Proverbs 20:24. -

*"A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?"*

There is so much comfort to be found when we remember that God is the only one in control of everything. Even though we will not always understand why things don't turn out the way we thought they should, or the way that seems best to us, we can trust that the way God is leading is the very best path for us. We are so limited in our understanding and in what we see. God sees everything, including what our future should look like. Blindly trusting God is far from easy, not because He isn't trustworthy, but because we have a hard time letting go of our own dreams and desires and trusting when there is so much unknown. But it is what we are called to do. And Psalm 18:30 reminds us that God's way is always perfect.

- Proverbs 16:9 -

*"The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps."*

We like to think we must have a 5-year plan, a 10-year plan, and a 20-year plan. Although there is nothing wrong with being responsible and thinking through, and even planning, what it will take to reach a goal we might have, we must keep in mind that at the end of the day, God is the one who ultimately decides what will work and what won't work. He is the one who decides the direction of our lives. And it is all for our good and His glory.

- Psalm 32:8 -

*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."*

Jesus left us an example to follow. We see in God's Word that He lived a life of humility and submission to God the Father. This is

how we are called to live as well. We can be tuned into Him, His ways, and His guidance by faithfully being in the Word and receiving instruction, one day at a time. Psalm 119:105 tell us that His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. God's Word, the Holy Spirit within us, and all of our circumstances (that come from the hand of our Heavenly Father) are all used to instruct, teach, guide, and counsel us.

- Psalm 34:17-19 -

*"The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

It can be very painful when our lives don't turn out as we thought they might. It can look like hardship to us. Circumstances that send us on a detour often leave us feeling confused and disappointed. Psalm 34 reminds us that crying out to the Lord during these times is okay. Even the "hard" that we experience comes from the hand of a loving father. The hard comes; if we lean into him and cling to his Word, it will equip us for his perfect plan. He knows us and what we need more than we know ourselves. Holy Spirit-infused faith will carry us when we experience those hard things that do not make sense to us and will enable us to be content even if what we experience doesn't make sense on a human level.

## What Good Comes When Life Doesn't Look Like You Thought It Would

How you respond when your plans fail will show you where you are in your process of growth and learning and what your heart is set on. You will see the areas of your life where you need to grow in your faith. God will work in your life, draw you closer to Him, and conform you more into His image.

You will get to experience a better plan. God's plans and ways are always better than our plans ever were. He will teach you things you never would have learned if it were not for the failed plans, and you will be used in ways you never imagined before.

You will get to know God in a way that you may not have if things had gone the way you planned. You will experience His presence in a new way as you lean not on your own understanding but trust in His promises and character.

You will learn to be content, regardless of your circumstances, in a new way as you learn to walk in obedience and seek His face, one day at a time.

### Find *Biblical Joy* When Life Doesn't Look the Way You Thought It Would By Focusing on God

#### Thank Him For Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Jehovah Shammah: The Lord is Here. Thank you for being present in all of my circumstances and in all of my confusion. You are here, and you won't leave me.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that tell me that you know what is best for me, that you direct my steps, and that you are sovereign over all things. Thank you for your promise in Matthew 16:25, which tells me, "if I give up my life for your sake, you will save it."

#### Thank Him For His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for all the ways in which you have been faithful in the past. You have directed my paths and put me in the places you want me to be so that you can accomplish what you want. You won't fail me now. You are faithful.

#### Thank Him For His Provisions

Thank you for all the ways you have provided for my needs. Even though I don't understand why things look so different than I thought they would, in this season, I trust you and that you will continue to provide for me.



# How to Find Biblical Joy

## When the Church Disappoints You

*“In the midst of the emotional and spiritual upset that occurs when a church hurts or disappoints us, we tend to lose sight of the fact that the local church is merely a collection of people on a challenging journey - a group of people that are involved in a long-term transformation process.”*

*- George Barna*

Have you had an experience with people in the Church that has caused you to become disappointed, disillusioned, or hurt? When it comes to being a part of the Church, it's easy to have expectations of how we should be treated or what we should experience when we walk through the front doors. When our experience doesn't match those expectations, it can be confusing.

If you are tempted to think that there is no hope for the Church today, take some time to read through the New Testament, and you will see that the problems we experience today were present back then as well. The book of Galatians reveals that the Church was dealing with legalism. The book of Colossians addresses heresy, and 1 and 2 Corinthians confront human pride and religious activity done with wrong motives.

I have experienced being disappointed by people in the Church. I have felt disillusioned and have wondered if I even want to walk through the church doors again. Thankfully, God has faithfully taught me through those circumstances and kept me from giving up. The Church is a flawed place, and so much damage has been done in the name of Jesus, but God still loves His Church and is still using it mightily.

**DON'T LOSE HOPE!**

There ARE many faithful believers who are striving to walk in biblical truth and who want to persevere in their faith. God is still alive and active in the lives of believers, and even though it can be easy to focus on those who have hurt us or haven't represented God well, we need to focus on God, His character, His purpose, and His calling. We must be reminded that we are all in the process of growth and learning, no matter how old we are.

## Verses to Help You When the Church Disappoints You

- 2 Chronicles 20:12 -

*"...We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."*

Focus on God. Ask God to help you to take your eyes off those who have hurt you and to help you focus on Him. You may be disappointed and hurt by God's people, but when we are overwhelmed, confused, and disappointed, we must fix our eyes on the one who will never let us down. Tell God, "I don't understand how they could do what they did. They judged me and turned against me. I'm overwhelmed, but I know this, my eyes are fixed on you, and I'm trusting in you."

- Matthew 6:14-15 -

*"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

Forgive. Ask God to help you forgive those who hurt and disappointed you. The reality is that we, at some point in our lives, have probably hurt someone "in the name of Jesus." At least, I know I have! Was I sincere? Yes. Did I believe I was doing the right thing? Of course. But I have had to ask for forgiveness more times than I can count, and I probably will have to in the future. With this in mind, we need to work towards having a forgiving heart towards those who have disappointed us.

- Psalms 119:105 -

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. I am severely afflicted; give me life, O LORD, according to your word!"*

Read the Word. Reliance on God's Word is the only way we will be able to live the Christian life successfully. If we take time to see things through a biblical lens, we will be reminded that we will never find peace if we focus on the imperfect Church. We must focus on our perfect, never changing, never failing God, and that will only happen when we are abiding in Him, spending time in His Word, and regularly communicating with Him in prayer.

## What Good Is There When the Church Disappoints You?

This is an opportunity to spend quiet time alone with God and ask him to help you to be sensitive to his Spirit. We can ask God to show us any time we may have hurt another person “in the name of Jesus,” and then we can contact them and ask for forgiveness. This is an opportunity to ask God to expose what is in your heart and show you how you view others. Do you see each person you come in contact with as someone who needs to be seen, heard, valued, and made in the image of God? Do you treat them the way God would have you treat his people?

This is an opportunity to study the Prayer of Lament and to make it a part of your daily prayer life. Pour out your heart to God. Tell him how you feel and about all that has happened. Be honest with him. Then fix your eyes on him, trust in him, and find your hope in him.

### Find *Biblical Joy* When the Church Disappoints You by Focusing on God

#### Thank Him For His Provisions

Father, thank you for providing us with “the Church,” your people. Help me to persevere with the Church and not give up because some of its members have hurt me. Please enable me to act in obedience to Hebrews 10:25 and “not give up meeting together.” Please enable me to encourage the Church “all the more as I see the day approaching.”

#### Thank Him For His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being faithful. Man will hurt and disappoint me, and I will do the same to others. You are the only One who is completely faithful and can be trusted fully. Please remind me of this when I am tempted to give up on the Church or those around me.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promise that even though we “see in a mirror dimly...” (1 Corinthians 13:12), we will one day be with you and will see you “face to face... and then we will “know fully, even as we have been fully known.” Thank you that one day we will have a full knowledge of You. There will be no more division among your people, only unity from having full knowledge of You.

#### Thank Him For Who He Is

Father, you are Adonai. You are sovereign over all, and you are the only God and Lord of my life. You are “good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all of them that call upon you.” (Psalm 86:5) Thank you for lavishing me with grace and forgiving me. Help me to be able to follow your example and forgive those who have disappointed me.





# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Face Family Conflict

*“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”*

*- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

Some of the hardest and most complicated relationships can be present within the family unit. Unlike other relationships that often come in and out of our lives or are there only for a season, our family members are people we will be connected to for our entire lives.

When conflict or a broken relationship happens, it can be devastating, confusing, and incredibly hurtful. Even if you choose to walk away, the connection that is there cannot be erased, and it affects you in a way that no other relationship can.

God put us in the family that we are in and has a plan for us. The family unit is important to him and can be used in a powerful way to point others to him.



## Verses to Help You When You Face Family Conflict

- Isaiah 53:5 -

*“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”*

Isaiah 53:5 tells us how God has given the ultimate provision for us when our heart is broken by family conflict or broken family relationships. There is almost nothing quite as painful or complex as the kind of struggles within a family – the people we are forever connected to. It’s always good to remember that he was crucified because of our sin, especially amidst family conflict. Because of his suffering, we can be healed and have peace. Remembering all that is available to us because of Jesus’ death on the cross, all that has been done for us, and how much grace we have been shown is vital. We can imitate Christ by viewing others through eyes of grace and extending to them the same grace we have been shown.

- Mark 11:2 -

*“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you’re your transgressions.”*

Even if a family member has sinned against us and hasn’t been able to admit it, it is crucial that we process through all that has happened and eventually come to the point where we can forgive them, even if they don’t ask for forgiveness. That can be very difficult, but it is so important for us to do so that we can be freed up to grow, move forward, heal, and serve God effectively. We must do our part to pursue peace and not allow bitterness to enter our hearts.

- Romans 12:18 -

*“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”*

We can ask God to show us what he wants us to do to seek peace in our family relationships. He will give guidance. I went to a dear

friend for counsel while going through an exceedingly difficult season with some family members. As much as I had tried to reach out and get the conflict cleared up, things just did not get any better. I found myself feeling guilty all the time because there was no peace.

When I shared what I was experiencing with my friend, she comforted me with this simple truth: “Just because you do all you can to live peaceably does not mean there will be peace. You are called to do what you can do. But that does not mean the other person will cooperate!” This freed me up! It was not all up to me. I was asking God to show me what my part was. I had to leave the rest in his hands.

### **What Good Comes When You Face Family Conflict?**

Experiencing family conflict can help us learn what it means to bear with others in love (Ephesians 4) and not to become easily offended (1 Corinthians 13). Seeking to work through conflict shows that the person is worth fighting for. It can strengthen the relationship eventually.

Experiencing family conflict can be used to help us get to know our family members better. As we learn the reasons behind why we respond the way we do, it can help us learn how to be more sensitive to each other.

Experiencing family conflict can help us learn how to communicate with each other better. Sometimes it can be hard to take the time to listen, especially to those with which we might have a complicated relationship. When we show that we care enough to take the time to communicate honestly, and we can hear what is being shared, it shows that they are valuable to us.

## Find *Biblical Joy* By Focusing on God

### **Thank Him for Who He Is**

Father, thank you for being Wonderful Counselor – the incomprehensible counselor. I cannot completely understand your ways or how you work in this world or my life, but I trust you. I know you have our best interest in mind and want to work through and in us. As I pray over the complicated relationships in my life, I pray that you would work in my heart so that I might know how you want me to reach out and pursue peace.

### **Thank Him for His Promises**

Father, thank you for your promises that you will make all things new (Revelation 21:5) and that in heaven, we will all worship you together as one if we are your children. I cling to those promises now and know that if my difficult family relationships are not fixed here on this earth, I will see them made perfect in heaven if we are a part of your family.

### **Thank Him for His Provisions**

Father, thank you for the people you have brought into my life for me to seek counsel from and for your Word that gives principles for me to follow as I interact with my family and seek to restore our relationship. Please help me hear your voice and how you are leading me in these tough times. Please soften my heart and the heart of my family member so that we can be at peace with each other and bring you glory as we share with others about your faithfulness.

### **Thank Him for His Faithfulness**

Father, thank you for being faithful. Your Word tells me you are faithful, and I have experienced your faithfulness in my life. I thank you, in advance, for how you will show yourself faithfully in my difficult family relationships. Please work in the hearts of those involved in the conflict, including my own heart.

# How to Find Biblical Joy

## When You Can't Find Your Dream Job

*“Satan and his devils want a whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow’s end, never honest, nor kind, nor happy now, but always using as mere fuel wherewith to heap the altar of the Future every real gift which is offered them in the Present.”*

*- C.S. Lewis*

We were “living the dream.” For over 20 years, we lived and worked what we would have considered to be our dream job. Everything we loved to do, and the gifts and abilities God had given us, were used in those years. Was it easy? No. Were there hard or frustrating days? Yes. Did we get paid a lot of money? No. In fact, there were times we wondered if we would even get a paycheck. But God always supplied all that we needed. We loved what we were called to do, and even in the hard seasons, we were so grateful that we could be there. But then it all changed.

Overnight it ended. The organization we worked for closed, and we were left wondering what we would do next. We could not imagine doing anything else, so we did not even know where to begin looking. Weeks led to months that have led to years. God has provided for our needs, and my husband has a job, but he is not working his dream job, and we are not living in our dream home. If I am honest, there are times we are confused about why God has us where he has us. But we have come to the point where we have accepted it and trust that he knows what is best. Here is what God has been teaching us:

## Verses to Help You When You Cannot Find Your Dream Job

- *Philippians 4:19* -

*“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

We are not guaranteed our dream job, but we are promised that God will meet our needs. God gives us gifts and abilities he wants to use for his purposes. Sometimes that means we will get a job that makes sense to us. But sometimes, he wants us to grow in different ways or have us learn new skills. He knows the future, and even though things might not make sense to us, it makes total sense to him. We can trust him.

- *Proverbs 19:21* -

*“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”*

I believe the concept of a “dream job” is an American mindset and not necessarily a biblical one. Of course, God has given us abilities and interests and wants to use us in unique ways, but that may not always be how we might think. We may be given the opportunity to work a job that we love, but God has a plan and wants to use us in the places he chooses. He knows what is best. For whatever reason, he puts us in the places he puts us, and he is using it for our good. It is how he has chosen to provide for us in the moment.

- *Proverbs 16:3* -

*“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”*

We are called to be faithful to do the work before us. At times that may be work that we love and feel qualified to do, or it may be something we are not as familiar with or something we do not even like very much. Our responsibility is to do what God has given us to do “to the glory of God” and to be faithful, one day at a time. He is doing something in us that we may not see. He is using us where we are in the present. He is growing us up. It is never a waste of time if we are seeking God and know we are in his will.

## What Good Is There When You Cannot Find Your Dream Job?

- We will see that God's plan was better than our dreams. God has a big-picture view in mind, and one day, we will see that his plan was perfect and better than any plan we could have dreamed up.
- We learn what it means to submit to God's plan. If we stay in the Word and submit ourselves to God, the circumstances that may seem confusing to us will be used to help us learn to trust God with the unknown and to submit to his plan. Even when it does not make sense to us.
- We will be able to tell others about God's faithfulness in our lives. As we learn to submit to and trust in God and his plan for us, we will have our eyes opened to all the ways he is being faithful. We can share how God taught us through our circumstances and how he faithfully provided for us in every way. We will be able to share how we learned to trust him and about the people we were able to serve.

### Find *Biblical Joy* By Focusing on God

#### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being a God who is faithful, one who is utterly dependable in every way. Knowing that is one of your attributes helps me to always keep my eyes on you because I know I can trust and rely on you.

#### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being faithful during the times I am confused about what you are doing and why you have me in the place I am in. You have provided for all my needs and are with me wherever I go. I am so thankful.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that tell me that you will direct, help, provide, uphold, strengthen, and enable me to do what I am called to do and that you have a perfect plan in mind. Please help me to cling to those promises when I do not understand what you are doing.

#### Thank Him for His Provisions

Father, thank you for all the ways you have provided for me. You have provided me with work to do and have provided all my needs. You have provided the strength I need to do what you have put in front of me, and I am so grateful for all you are doing.





# How to Find Biblical Joy When God Does Not Provide the Way You Want Him To

*“God is God. Because he is God, He is worthy of my trust and obedience. I will find rest nowhere but in His holy will that is unspeakably beyond my largest notions of what he is up to.”*

*- Elisabeth Elliot*

I remember it like it was yesterday. We were struggling financially because my husband’s organization didn’t have the funds to pay us that month. Not sure how we would pay our bills, we prayed for God’s provision and tried to remain faithful to what He had called us to do.

This wasn’t the first time this had happened, though, and I was tired. Yes, I desired to trust God with this, but if I’m being honest, I was weary and fed up with the organization’s weaknesses. I wanted that paycheck. I wanted to hold it in my hands, see the correct dollar amount written on that check, and feel the stability that came with that!

One evening there was a knock on the front door. When my husband opened it, there stood some dear friends, their arms filled with boxes of food. “We went to Costco and bought you some things!” For the next few minutes, my husband helped our friends unload the back of their car of all the different kinds of food they had purchased for us. Meat, produce, snacks, and all sorts of things we needed and didn’t have the money to buy. I stood and watched as my living room was filled with boxes. My husband fought back tears of gratefulness. Me? I fought back feelings of disappointment. Why? Because this is not how I wanted God to provide for us. I wanted the paycheck! I wanted money in the bank. I wanted to pay our bills and be done with it.

God had another plan. He wanted to provide in his own way. He wanted to build and strengthen our faith.



## Verses to Help You When God Does Not Provide the Way You Want Him To

- Psalm 37:25 -

*"I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread."*

Psalm 37:25 is the verse my husband quoted on a regular basis during that season I shared in the introduction. It is the verse he clung to and encouraged me to cling to. We can trust God to provide for us. Why? Because, as you see in this verse, he says he will. As in my case, his provision may not always look the way we thought it might, but he provides. We will always have what we need.

- Matthew 6:25 -

*"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"*

We can be assured that our needs are important to God. We do not need to be anxious about if or how our needs will be met. When we do not know how to make ends meet, we are reminded that he wants to do more than provide for just our physical needs. He wants to use the times of unknowns to help us learn to trust in him. He wants to grow our faith.

- Philippians 4:19 -

*"And my God will fully supply your every need according to his glorious riches in the Messiah Jesus."*

God controls all things and is the one who owns everything. He uses everything for our good and his glory. He is glorified when He gives us the gift of providing for our physical needs, and we have been depending and waiting on him. When He uses those times of waiting and depending on him to grow us up more into his likeness, he is glorified. His provision is used as a springboard for the world to see his faithfulness and bring him glory!

## What Good Comes When God Does Not Provide the Way You Want Him to

When we look to God to provide for our needs, we are given an opportunity to see Him provide in creative ways and in ways we do not expect him to. We will grow in our faith because we see God provide in ways we never imagined.

Our need for God to provide for our needs allows others to be used by God to meet those needs. The body of Christ has a calling to help meet the needs of those around them, especially other brothers and sisters in Christ. It is encouraging to feel prompted by God to meet another person's needs and to see our needs met by other brothers and sisters in Christ. The way others have served me, and my family, has been such an encouragement and has been an example for me to follow as I seek to serve others. Experiencing the blessing of others being used makes me want to be used in that same way.

When our needs are met in ways we did not expect, we are given so many unique stories to share about God's provision and his faithfulness. One of our highest callings is to proclaim God's faithfulness. When we share all the ways that God has provided, especially to those in need, it can give them hope that God will provide for them as well.

### Find *Biblical Joy* by Focusing on God

#### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-Jireh, "The Lord Will Provide." In the same way, you provided for your children in the many accounts in the scriptures, you have promised you will provide for me. Help me to cling to your promises and be encouraged by the testimonies of others.

#### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, all I need to do is reflect on my life, and I will see example after example of how you have provided for me. Cause me to remember all the big and small ways you have provided for all my needs and then fill me with hope for the future. I know that you will continue to be faithful.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that tell me you will provide for all my needs, whether they be physical or spiritual. I know you will provide because I can trust you to keep your promises. I am so grateful.

#### Thank Him for His Provisions

Father, thank you for all the unique and creative ways that you have provided for me over my entire lifetime and thank you for the opportunities that you have given me to turn to you, trust your promises, grow in my faith, wait on you, and then experience your provision. You are good. You are faithful.



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Are Experiencing Sickness or Pain

*“I venture to say that the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of sickness. Sickness has frequently been of more use to the saints of God than health has.”*

*- Charles Spurgeon*

For the past two months, I have been experiencing pain that will not go away. Although it has decreased, I have awakened every morning and been greeted with pain. The doctor knows what is causing it, says it is treatable, and that it just takes time for it to go away, but this is the longest I have ever experienced a physical ailment and the longest it has taken to recover. Then, this morning, I experienced yet another injury that has made it very difficult to walk. All of this combined has caused me to be physically and emotionally very tired. I long to feel better, to walk without pain, and to be able to move on from this season of physical pain.

Even though this has been very difficult, I am thankful that it has revealed some things that I need to change so that my body will become stronger and so that, hopefully, I won't have this problem again. I am thankful for what I'm learning about my body and that it has been a gauge, telling me what I need to do as I move forward. I want to work hard to strengthen weak areas. I am also thankful for how God has sustained me and enabled me to do what I need to each day, despite the pain.

It's humbling to be weak physically, to be seen as weak, and to be seen as someone who needs help. Being in this position has exposed things in my heart that I didn't realize had somewhat of a stronghold on me. I don't like to be seen as weak or needy. I want to feel strong and independent. God has his ways of using our physical weakness to show us how weak we really are in every way and how much we need Him.

## Verses to Help You When You Are Experiencing Sickness or Pain

- Psalms 73:26 -

*“My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.”*

It's easy to think that we might be the one who won't have to experience serious sickness or physical pain, but if God allows you to live long enough, you will inevitably experience something that will show you that you are not guaranteed good health or a pain-free life. Making it a habit of practicing the reliance on the One who is “the strength of my heart” is invaluable. It is what will sustain you in your times of physical weakness.

- Romans 5:3-5 -

*“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”*

There is something to be gained in all of our life circumstances. God uses it all, even our suffering, to help us learn to persevere in our faith, to produce godly character, and to cause us to hope in the “unseen things” that He promises to those who are. His children.

- Isaiah 41:10 -

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

We are promised that God will strengthen us and help us in our times of weakness. He is our stability and our strength. We have nothing to fear. He promises that he will uphold you with his righteous right hand.

## What Good Comes When You Are Experiencing Sickness or Pain?

- When you experience sickness or pain, those around you are given an opportunity to serve you, putting you in the very humbling position of needing to be served. This is a gift because it allows the body of Christ to live the way they are called to live by caring for one who is weak or suffering.
- Experiencing sickness or pain gives you an opportunity to draw closer to God and learn how to rely on him for healing, strength, and peace.
- Experiencing sickness & pain slows you down so that you have more time to focus on God, how He is trying to speak into your life, and what He wants to do in you. It can be a season that causes an amazing amount of growth as you cry out to God and learn to further rely on him.
- Experiencing sickness and pain can allow you the valuable opportunity to see God provide for your needs, whether practical, physical, or spiritual, as you pray, “Father, lead me to the right source for help.”

### Find *Biblical Joy* in Sickness By Focusing on God

#### Thank Him For Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Yahweh Rapha, “The Lord Who Heals.” You are the One who can heal my body by preserving it and curing the pain and sickness that I am experiencing, and You are the One who heals my soul by forgiving me of all of my sin. Thank you for all I have been given and all that is available to me as your child.

#### Thank Him For His Provisions

Thank you for providing so many precious people who care for me. You have used them in mighty ways, and I am so grateful. Thank you for the doctors who do their best to diagnose and treat whatever is wrong with me, and for the medicine that helps cure and ease pain. Thank you for the gift of sleep, the restful days that characterize my life right now, and the opportunity to slow down and draw closer to you.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for all of your promises that tell me that you are with me always, that you will never leave me or forsake me, and that you will help and strengthen me. I cannot make it through this life, or this pain, without you and the unmatched hope and help that is found in you.

#### Thank Him For His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being the God of my circumstances and for being faithful to enable me to walk through each day you have given me. You are faithful in my sickness, and you are faithful in my health. When I reflect on the past, I am reminded of all the ways you have been faithful. This encourages me and gives me hope that you will be faithful in the future.



# How to Find Biblical Joy When a Child Walks Away from God

*“God doesn’t want us to rescue our children. He’s the Rescuer.”*

*- Elizabeth Musser*

From the moment our children are born, the weight of responsibility that we have to teach, train, and point them to God is an ever-present reality. We work hard to have good conversations, read good books, provide them with biblically based resources, live out the gospel in our home, ensure they are in a good church, and sift through everything that might influence them. We are on call 24/7, and we pray constantly. We work hard so that the foundation that is laid will be solid enough for them to begin building their faith, and so they will desire to choose to follow God when they are adults. But what do we do when a child walks away from it all? How can we learn to live with the reality of having a child who has no interest in living for God?

If this has happened in your family, I want to give you a (virtual) hug and tell you that I am so sorry for the pain you are feeling because of your child’s choices, choices that are completely out of your control. There is no more helpless feeling than to watch a child choose a path that we know is not the best for them. It is probably one of the hardest things a parent can go through.

So what do we do when this happens? How can we possibly have joy when faced with the challenge of having a child walk away from God?



## Verses for When a Child Walks Away from God

- Psalm 116:2 -

*“Because he bends down to listen, I will pray  
as long as I have breath.”*

Pray! Never stop! I love this verse and how it points out that God bends down to listen. We can be assured that he hears our prayers, which are powerful. He hears them and works even when we can't see it. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5) for your children, asking God to open their eyes to their need of Him.

- Romans 12:10 -

*“Be devoted to one another in love....”*

Love unconditionally and be devoted to love. I can't think of a better person to love in this way than our own child! And when we love in this way, devotedly and unconditionally, we obey God's command to put on love no matter the circumstances. We are also modeling Christ's unconditional love for us.

- Ezekiel 36:26-28 -

*“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put  
within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from  
your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”*

This verse is a reminder that God is ultimately the one who can change hearts. We do not have the power to do work in their heart. We can find renewed hope in God and His power when we read this verse and understand its truth.

- 1 Chronicles 16:11 -

*“Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.”*

Stand strong. This is a key moment for us to practice standing strong in our faith and finding hope and strength in the God we say we serve—the God we want our children to serve. It is a time when our children will be able to see if what we have taught them and what we desire for them is a reality in our own lives when we cling to the one they say they are not interested in.



## What Good Can Come When a Child Walks Away from God?

This might be a time of eye-opening growth for you. Take the time to evaluate your own life. Ask God to show you if there are any inconsistencies or blind spots that you might need to deal with. I do not mean to imply that we are to blame for our children's choices, but there might be something that has been said or done (unintentionally) that may have been a discouragement or caused them to stumble. One of the ways that we can continue to live out our own growing faith in front of our children is to seek forgiveness for anything we may have done to discourage them. Our humility in admitting we aren't perfect can be very impactful.

This can be another opportunity to love your child well by being quiet and listening to their thought process. Thinking things through for themselves is a good thing. Questioning can be a good thing. And even though it is not God's desire that anyone walk away from him, he can use even that to show a person how much they need him. He is able to draw them to himself. We can have renewed hope as we focus on that truth.

A renewed perspective. The only perfect parent is God. He is our Father and has been dealing with rebellious children since the beginning of time. He has been hurt, disappointed, misunderstood, and rejected by His children, yet He loves and forgives us. When we are reminded of this amazing reality, we can view our children in the same way God views us.

## Find *Biblical Joy* When a Child Walks Away from God by Focusing on God

### **Thank Him for His Faithfulness**

Father, you are faithful even when I am not. As hard as I've tried to be a perfect parent, I know that I am incapable of attaining perfection, and my child has seen my flaws and weaknesses. I know I have not always represented you well. But you are faithful. You are perfect. Please help my child understand and experience that truth.

### **Thank Him for His Promises**

Father, thank you for your promises that I can cling to when what is going on around me appears hopeless. All of life is out of my control. Thank you that your Word promises that You are in control of everything and that You can draw all people to yourself.

### **Thank Him for Who He Is**

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-M'kad-desh - The Lord Who Sanctifies and Makes Holy. You are the only One who can save and cleanse your people. You are the only one who can change a person's heart and cause them to want to follow you. I know that you are able to bring my child into a right relationship with you.

### **Thank Him for His Provisions**

Father, thank you for your provision of eternal life that was made possible through the death of your very own son. This is a gift that I can never repay. I offer you my life and ask that you will use it for your purposes here on this earth, and I look forward and find hope and joy in all that you promise to provide for your children in eternity. Please open my child's eyes to all you have done to provide for him.



# How to Find Biblical Joy in the Daily Grind

*"Isn't it funny how day by day nothing changes, but when you look back, everything is different."*

*- C.S. Lewis*

Most people come to a point in their lives when they are suddenly struck with the reality of the day-in and day-out of living life, and they begin to question what it's all about. A friend shared with me recently that he came to a crisis point when he turned 30. He'd been busy living the daily mundane and hadn't taken time to assess where he was in life. As he looked around, he saw all he'd been doing, what he had accomplished, and began to panic, wondering if he had been wasting time. Often we come to these crossroads in life and wonder, "Is this all there is? What have I done with my life? What have I accomplished? Am I behind? How did I get here? Am I wasting my time?"

If you were to stop and evaluate right now, how would you feel about where you are at in life and what you have accomplished so far? Would you wonder what you've been doing with your time and if you've accomplished anything? Would you feel discouraged? Of course, there will always be room for improvement and growth, but if you are seeking God and His guidance, you are more than likely right where He wants you to be. He is sovereign, and his plans and timetable differ from ours. There is nothing that anyone can do to hinder what God wants to do in your life.

I find that to be very comforting!

When taking time to evaluate, remember this: God has called us to partner with him in all things. That means we are partnering with him in the daily grind. All those things you do without thinking, the things you do over and over again, the job you have been called to – at home or the workplace - are the things that he has ordained for us to do each day.

God created us to partner with him in everything. This is how his creation is sustained, how his plans are worked out in our lives, the lives of those we touch, and in the world. All of the big and little things we do every day have value and give us purpose, and He is right beside us in all of this.

## Verses to Help You in the Daily Grind

- 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 -

*“For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”*

We are called to work hard with our hands, earn a living, live orderly lives, and work with quietness. In verse 12, believers are encouraged to live and work in this way so that unbelievers would not have any reason to criticize those who claim to be Christ followers. When someone comes into your home or your workplace, the way that we work should be a reflection of who we serve.

- Colossians 3:23 -

*“Whatsoever you do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.”*

We are called to work heartily, for the glory of God, with the realization that we are partnering with God to accomplish what he has given us to accomplish. In this verse, Paul was instructing the Thessalonians on how to work so that they would gain the respect of those around them and so that their work would point to God.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 -

*“... pray without ceasing.”*

What does this verse have to do with the daily grind and doing the same work every day? We should see our daily work as service to God and use it as an opportunity to connect with him throughout the day. This will help us to be sensitive to his spirit and not forget why we are doing what we do.

Praying without ceasing does not mean we have to be in prayer every moment, but we can get into the habit of speaking with God off and on throughout the day. We can tune in and communicate with him about the big and little things, ask for wisdom, and pray for others. This will help us remember our purpose in the daily grind and will cause biblical joy, knowing that he is in all we do.

## What Good Is There in the Daily Grind?

You, your family, and all those you come in contact with benefit from the work you do in the daily grind, and if you can remember the big picture, you will remember that you have partnered with God, are living each day for God's glory, and that all is being used for his purposes.

God is always working, even if we don't see it. He is working, and we are growing as we trust him in these quiet moments at home, in the chaos of raising children, in the business of the office, in the day-in and day-out of life. God is working.

The daily grind can become a sacrifice that we offer to God each day from a heart that is growing in its love for Him. From the moment we wake up to the moment we sleep, we can offer our moments to God and submit ourselves to him as we do the tasks and work he has assigned us each day.

### Find *Biblical Joy* in the Daily Grind by Focusing on God

#### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being El Hakkvod. Everything exists to bring you honor and glory. All that you have created reveals your beauty, power, knowledge, and creativity. The hidden work, the work that others see, the big things, and the small things you have called me to do all point to you. You are in it all, and I want to glorify you in all of it.

#### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, you have been faithful to give me a purpose in this life, and it all points back to you and what you are doing in this world. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it all.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that you are conforming me to your image, one day at a time, as I look to you and seek your strength so that I might be faithful in the daily grind. Thank you for providing work for me to do. Thank you for the daily grind and for being a part of every bit of it!

#### Thank Him for His Provision

Father, thank you for providing me the strength and ability to accomplish what you want to accomplish in and through me. Thank you that I have the privilege to be a part of your bigger plan in this world.



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Are Grieving

*"I speak of the 'ascent.' I am convinced that every death, of whatever kind, through which we are called to go must lead to a resurrection. This is the core of the Christian faith. Death is the end of every life and leads to resurrection, the beginning of every new one. It is a proper progression, the way things were meant to be, the necessary means of ongoing life. But the death of the beloved means, in a different but perhaps equally fearsome way, a going through the valley of the shadow."*

*- Elisabeth Elliot*

My father passed away just a few months ago. From the time he was admitted to the hospital, it only took ten days for his body to stop functioning. Watching my dad die, and walking with my family through this loss, was probably the hardest thing I've ever experienced. It's still hard to believe he is gone.

One of the strangest things about grief is that while you are mentally trying to wrap your brain around the reality that your loved one is gone, you are faced with the finality of what their absence means every time you think about them. It's almost too much to process. One second you feel normal, and the next second you are struck with the reality that nothing is the same and will never be the same again. You are forever changed.

I don't think that grief ever really leaves you. It becomes a part of who you are, and you have to learn to live with this unwelcome guest. I have found that ever since my dad's death, I don't have the same capacity to do what I used to be able to do. I get tired more easily and lose my motivation faster. Several friends have told me that what I am experiencing is normal.

I'm not a huge fan of grief, but God has used it in my life and continues using it in ways I never imagined. So, although it has not been fun, I am thankful for the fruit that has resulted from going through this difficult experience.

## Verses in the Bible That Help with Grief

- Psalm 147:3 -

*“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

This Psalm reminds us of where our true comfort and healing come from. Isn't it encouraging to know that our heavenly Father is always there, ready to meet us in our grief, strengthen comfort, and heal our broken hearts? This is just a glimpse of what we will experience in heaven!

- Psalm 34:18 -

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*

God understands how it feels to have a broken heart and to be crushed in spirit. This verse describes grief perfectly. He watches over you and hears your cry. He has experienced what we experience in every way. There is comfort in knowing that He is near, understands, and saves.

- Revelation 21:4 -

*“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

We can have joy when we read this verse because it gives us the promise that one day we will not feel the pain that we are feeling today. In eternity there will be no more grief! Knowing that there is an end in sight helps us to persevere in our faith. Focusing on the unseen things is what gives us biblical joy.



## What Good Comes from Grief?

When we experience grief, it is another opportunity that we have been given to draw near to God. James 4 tells us that if you draw near to God, He will draw near to you. We have a promise that He is there, and all we have to do is lift our eyes to Him and pour out our hearts to Him. We are given permission to tell him how we feel. We have been given an opportunity to get closer to God.

When we experience grief, it serves as a reminder that we need to make each day count. We need to number our days.

Death serves as a reminder that life is short and we are not guaranteed tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1). When faced with this reality, it is an opportunity to commit ourselves to make the most of each day. We are challenged to be faithful to our callings, seeing every moment as a gift from God's hand.

It is a reminder that we need to value and love those who are a part of our lives.

We have a calling to "love one another, (for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7). When we lose a loved one, it can heighten our awareness of the need we have to love those who are still with us – and love them well. It can be used as a reminder to evaluate our priorities and get them in order if we see we have been lacking, especially in loving others.

It causes us to reflect on our lives and be reminded of God's provision and faithfulness and how he may have used the person who is now gone.

Whether you had a good relationship with the one who is now gone or a complicated relationship, grief can be used to cause us to reflect back on our lives and see how God used that person – for better or for worse. That person was in our lives for a purpose. What can we learn from our time spent with them? What do we want to do or not do after remembering? What area can we grow in? Is there a need for change?

## Find *Biblical Joy* in Grief By Focusing on God

### **Thank Him for His Provision**

Father, thank you for your provision in my life. You have never forsaken me and have provided for all my needs, big and small. Thank you that you will provide what I need to make it through this time of grief.

### **Thank Him for His Promises**

Father, thank you for being true to your promise that you will “never leave me or forsake me.” (Hebrew 13:5) Thank you that I can trust you, that I can go to you whenever I need to, and that you will never let me go.

### **Thank Him for His Faithfulness**

Father, you have been faithful in every way up until this moment. Even the things I don't understand have been used for good. Thank you for always being there for me.

### **Thank Him for Who He Is**

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-Rapha – The Lord Who Heals. Thank you that you will heal my broken heart because that is who you are. But thank you for also promising to heal both body and soul. You haven't missed anything. You are aware of what I am going through, and you are there to heal.



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Face Financial Struggles

*“Money is really worth no more than as it can be used to accomplish the Lord’s work. Life is worth as much as it is spent for the Lord’s service. Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you. Laying up treasures in heaven will draw the heart heavenward.”*

*- George Muller*

My husband and I have never made a lot of money. Having worked in ministry-type positions for most of our married life, the organizations we were connected with weren’t able to pay their employees very much, which often left us staring at our checkbook at the end of the month, wondering how we were going to pay our bills. Sometimes, living this way has become frustrating, and I have grown weary.

Humanly speaking, my husband should probably be making more money than he does. He has two master’s degrees and years of experience, but the bottom line has always been that we know God called us to each place we have served. He has shut every door we tried to aggressively kick down, trying to force ourselves into another (better?) way of living. Ultimately, we have submitted to what we’ve been called to do, even when we didn’t always understand why God kept us there. This has been used to help us learn what it means to trust God to provide for all our needs.

As believers, we are responsible for stewarding what God entrusts into our care. The paychecks and possessions he places in our hands are given to meet our needs and are to be used for his purposes. Have there been times over the years when we came up short at the end of the month or when a need arose? Yes. There have been more times than I can count when we wondered how we would be able to pay a bill, get a broken-down car repaired, pay for braces for our children, replace a broken microwave, or even buy a gift for an upcoming baby shower. During those times, and many others like them, we have gone through a process of feeling helpless, frustrated, stressed, and finally, asking God to provide.

After 34 years of living this way, I can tell you that there has never been a time that God has not been faithful. He has always met our needs in ways that had his name written all over it. We have always had more than we need.

Have we always managed our money perfectly? Absolutely not. We have been in a learning process when it comes to budgeting our money, but God has been so merciful to us and has graciously provided in miraculous ways, even when we were less than perfect in our money management. Ultimately, he knows our heart's desire has been to steward his provisions well.

What JOY we have experienced knowing that He has been faithful, even in the times we may not have been as faithful as we should have been, and that his promises that tell us he will provide for all our needs are TRUE.

## **Verses to Help You When You Face Financial Struggles**

- Psalm 37:25 -

*"I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread."*

I love this verse. God has never, and will never, forsake his children. We can cling to this verse and find hope and JOY in its promise!

- Proverbs 3:9-10 -

*"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."*

If our heart desires to honor God with what he entrusts into our hands, he sees that and will bless it. Will we be millionaires and have the possessions that match what our culture sees as "needs" or show we are "successful"? Maybe, but when we strive to prayerfully steward our money, some of those things will more than likely be taken off our list as our desires change.

- *Philippians 4:19* -

*“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

When we look at our circumstances and conclude that we have financial struggles, God sees things differently. It is not a struggle for him. He can supply every need we have. Every single one of them!

## **What Good Comes When You Face Financial Struggles**

- It’s an opportunity to trust God and live in expectation of his provision. Having financial needs is something God can use to get our attention. When we stop relying on our own abilities, he can enter in and work his miracles. This is when we learn, in a more profound way, what it means to rely on him.
- It’s an opportunity to ask God if there is something we should be doing better in managing our money. We can take advantage of this time, when God has our attention, and ask him to show us if there is any way we have not honored him in how we have spent our money. We can ask him to show us how we can better steward what he has already given us.
- It’s an opportunity to tell others of God’s faithfulness. When we rely on God and ask for him to provide for our needs, we have the opportunity to experience provision in a supernatural way. We then have a prime opportunity to tell everyone who will listen about how faithful God has been in our lives!

## Find *Biblical Joy* by Focusing on God

### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being Yahweh-Jireh - "The Lord Will Provide." Thank you for all the examples you have given, in your Word, of how you provided for your children in the past. They are reminders of who you are, your character, and that you can be trusted to provide for me in every way.

### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, thank you for being faithful and dependable in every way. I have no reason to doubt that you will be faithful today and in the future.

### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for the many promises found in your Word that you will provide for my every need. I am focusing on those promises today and clinging to them. They provide joy even when, humanely speaking, things look challenging.

### Thank Him for His Provisions

Father, thank you for faithfully providing for me in the past. I have everything I need and more! I thank you, in advance, for how you will provide for me in the future.



# How to Find Biblical Joy When You Are Facing Infertility

*“We can trust God with our brokenness because Psalm 34:18 shows us exactly where God is when we are hurting: ‘The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.’”*

*- Lillian Day*

You love God, are committed to living for him, and have a strong marriage. You and your husband have good jobs and a home waiting to be filled. There is only one thing missing – children. You and your husband want children and have been praying that God bless you with a family.

Time passes, and you watch as, one by one, women all around you excitedly announce they are expecting. You attend baby shower after baby shower and work hard to rejoice with those sweet friends who are rejoicing and celebrating their precious gift of a new family member. You carefully and thoughtfully pick out a gift for each baby, praying that one day it will be your turn to begin collecting all that is needed to welcome your own little one into your home. Then Mother’s Day rolls around - again.

You sit in church and listen while mothers are honored and celebrated. Then you quietly sit back as family after family files out of the church, get into their cars, and drive away to enjoy a special celebration over lunch. You and your husband quietly drive home and eat lunch, just the two of you.

Another Mother’s Day has passed, and you still are not a mother.

Infertility. It is not a struggle any woman wants to face, and it is one of the hardest things one can go through. It was never God’s intent for anyone to have to walk through infertility, yet everything in the world was altered as soon as sin entered. Sadly, some women suffer with infertility. If you are one of these women, I want to tell you how deeply sorry I am. The numb, aching in your heart that is present, although not seen by those around you, is seen by God. Your struggles and tears have not only been seen, but as David wrote in Psalm 56, God has kept count of your tossings and put your tears in a bottle.



## Verses to Help You When You Face Infertility

- Psalm 56:8 -

*“You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not in your book?”*

God sees our suffering and tears and is always close by, helping us bear our burdens. He notices every tear we cry. He is our tender-hearted Father, and he weeps with us.

- Revelation 21:4 -

*“he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

Your tears are not futile; God sees them, and it stirs up his compassion for you. You are his child, he fully knows you, and your tears are seen. Joy and comfort can be found when you focus on this truth. You can have hope as you look forward to the day when there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain!

- Isaiah 26:3-4 -

*“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.”*

Even in this trial, you can trust wholeheartedly in God. It is okay to pour your heart out to God and be honest with your feelings. You can lament! But part of lamenting is getting to the point that you can say that you trust in him no matter what happens. Going through this processing of emotions and then leaning into him will enable you to trust him and be flooded with his perfect peace.

## What Good Comes When You Face Infertility

In your suffering, you have an opportunity to experience God's mercy that will never cease. He allows you to grieve, understands your broken heart, and offers you his rest and comfort in the pain. He promises relief and hope amidst all of it.

You have the opportunity to choose to find your strength in your God and your identity. Yes, your heart longs to be a mother. That is a beautiful and normal desire that God put in the heart of women. But in your infertility struggle, you can be reminded of where your first and most important identity lies – in Christ. You are his child. That will never change. Choosing to focus on that and what that means can be used to strengthen your relationship with God and prepare you for the suffering that you might face in the future. This is an opportunity to learn, in a deeper way, that you are not in control. You can eat the right things, get plenty of rest, take all the supplements to support a healthy pregnancy, exercise regularly, and go to the doctor for counsel, but you have absolutely no control over your fertility.

### Find *Biblical Joy* by Focusing on God

#### Thank Him for Who He Is

Father, thank you for being El Shaddai, "God Almighty." You have ultimate power over all things. I trust you and know that, whether or not I have a child, you are still over all things, have a purpose for all that happens in this life, and will one day wipe all of my tears away, and I will have a clear understanding of why you have worked the way you have chosen to work.

#### Thank Him for His Faithfulness

Father, you are a faithful God. Thank you for all you have done and how you have worked in my life up until now. Because of your faithfulness in the past, I know I can trust that you will be faithful in the future, even when I do not understand why you are allowing me to suffer from infertility.

#### Thank Him for His Provisions

Father, I do not want to allow whether or not I conceive to determine if I experience biblical joy. I want to focus on you and be thankful for all the ways you have provided in my lifetime. You have given me life and have provided all my needs. You have provided me with your Word so I can better know you. I am so grateful. Help me to focus on, and cling to you alone.

#### Thank Him for His Promises

Father, thank you for your promises that give me comfort in each moment, hope for the future, and joy amidst heartache.



*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

*- James 1:2-4*

“Choose joy” is a familiar phrase that is popular in our culture. You can find it on cute coffee mugs, trendy tee shirts and sweatshirts, magnets for your refrigerator, and plaques for your wall.

You and I both know that nothing in this world will bring us true, lasting, biblical joy. The kind of joy that you and I need to choose is the joy that comes when we choose to lift our eyes off of our difficult circumstances, off the things of this world that only give a temporary sense of happiness, off the people who are unable to meet our every need, and on to the only stable, reliable One who promises that there is more to this life than what we are currently experiencing.

Our God has promised us so much more! May we grow in our understanding of what it means to “Count it all joy...” James 1:2-4

**Gina Smith** is a writer and author. She has been married for 34 years to Brian, a college professor, and athletic trainer. For 25+ years she and her husband served on a Christian college campus as the on-campus parents, where Brian was a professor and dean of students. They reside right outside of Washington DC and are the parents of two grown children, one daughter-in-law, and one son-in-law. She recently authored her first traditionally published book *Everyday Prayers for Joy*, available everywhere books are sold. You can find Gina at the following: Website: [ginalsmith.com](http://ginalsmith.com), Instagram, and at Million Praying Moms, where she is a writer.

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