



REJOICE

30-Day Devotional



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Introduction

In today's world, if there is one thing we need, it is joy. Not just happiness or contentment, but JOY! There is only one place we can find pure joy and that is through Jesus Christ.

This devotional was created to compliment the Rocky Mountain Ministry Network's 2022 Women's Conferences. Each day was prayed over, contemplated, and written by women living and serving within our Network. Each woman has written from her personal experience and revelation.

We pray that as you journey through the next 31 days, that God speaks to you in a new and fresh way, revealing to you how to obtain true JOY!

Day 1

What is Joy?

Linda Bottoms

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.” Galatians 5:22 (NLT)

Have you ever met someone who seems to always be at peace, no matter their circumstances? Their world may be falling apart around their feet, but they still seem to smile. Is that what is considered the Joy of the Lord?

I found myself experiencing that kind of Joy over 25 years ago when I was in an emergency room with major complications with my pregnancy. It was too early for our middle child to be born, and yet, there I was making major decisions about his quickly approaching birth. I can say, honestly, that I was confident my God would come through and that my son would be born completely healthy and ready to be brought home. That was not the case. He was, in fact, born with underdeveloped lungs and had to be taken to a different hospital in another city. This is where I discovered what the Joy of the Lord was, and how His Joy gave me strength. Without His Joy, I would not have been able to withstand the eight days my son remained in NICU before God performed a miracle, and we were able to take him home.

The Greek word for Joy is *chairó*. When we follow Christ, I mean completely surrender to Him and His plan for us, He fills us with *chairó*' joy. This kind of joy that is spoken about in Galatians 5:22, also known as the fruit of the Spirit, is not “happiness” or “excitement.” This kind of joy is taking delight in life regardless of the circumstances and challenges you face. It works together with gratitude and obedience. *Chairó*' joy brings peace.

It doesn't mean we are happy about the circumstances we find ourselves in, but that we have the Joy of the Lord to sustain us. This kind of Joy is a focus, not a feeling.

Challenge

When you find yourself in a situation that wouldn't naturally bring your joy, ask God to fill you with *chairó*. Only with *chairó* can we face the unthinkable.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I ask that you fill me with joy to face whatever comes today, full of the peace and assurance that you have it all under control.

Day 2
Joy vs. Being Happy
Natasha Hansen

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” Romans 15:13 (ESV)

Stop being happy. Believe.

“Life has been rough. I haven’t been happy, so I thought I would try church and God again.” My heart sunk as I listened to this sweet broken-hearted woman. “Try church and God.” These words have echoed in my head and grieved my heart as it highlights how many in the church and our culture have approached our loving Savior.

The reality is we approach God as one of the many options in a long list of methods to find happiness in life. We have forgotten who He is, what He has done for us, and what He continues to do. It is true that circumstances can dictate our happiness, but happiness is meant to be temporary; joy is meant to be everlasting. Happiness can be taken from us. Joy can’t be taken away because it comes from the Lord. When we choose to believe in Him, He invites us to experience in His fullness of joy.

What this broken-hearted woman didn’t realize when she said that she was going to “try church and God” is that she had allowed her circumstances to be greater than God. Her pursuit in feeling happy had blinded her from the eternal joy, peace, and hope that would carry her through all of life’s trials. All that was required of her to experience his joy was to believe.

Challenge

You may find yourself broken-hearted and disillusioned because of your circumstances. You might have told yourself that if your circumstances would change then you would be happy. Your answer isn’t found in your problems being fixed; your answer is found in a loving Savior who offers you eternal joy; all you must do is believe. When you believe you will experience joy even if your circumstances are grim. When you believe, you make him greater than your circumstances and the Holy Spirit will empower you to experience hope that can only be found in him.

Prayer

Jesus, forgive me for seeking happiness and not you. I trust you with my circumstances and life. I choose to believe that you love me so much that you died for me on the cross and rose again to set me free from my sin. Thank you for your joy, and for the power of the Holy Spirit so that I can have unwavering hope in you.

Day 3
Rejoicing In Difficulties
Shellie Wooten

“Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.” 1 Peter 1:21 (NLT)

The door slammed as she yelled, “You don’t ever let me do anything!” This was not completely true. We had let her do some things, which were met with half-truths, a missed curfew, and that silly social media picture that put her in a place she was not supposed to be.

Trust. When I hear that word, I revisit the times I had those hard conversations with my teens about gaining back trust. “Once trust is broken,” I had said many times, “it’s hard to get it back.” This difficult venture involves trusting to gain back trust. This does not come easy when teenagers are in the mix, but worth the journey to building trust.

I had the great privilege of growing up in a home that fully trusts God. When someone was sick, we retrieved the oil and prayed. Not once did we distrust that God was able to do exceedingly more than we thought or imagined. We believed and we trusted. It was a great gift, really. To know God and trust Him completely. It was baked in my DNA.

In all my years of following Christ, He has never given me reason not to trust Him. He just always has held that honored place. When difficulties came in waves, we trusted. When we suffered loss, we trusted. When finances turned into the red, we trusted. When the medical report drove us to our knees, we trusted. Time after time, God proved He was worthy of our trust. Never was it broken or lost.

Family will fail us and will cause trust to be rebuilt. Friends will fall short, and grace will need to be given and trust restored. We will forget the greatest commandment—to love the Lord our God with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves. We will have to request for others to trust us again. In one thing I am sure, God is faithful. You can rejoice knowing that God is trustworthy.

Challenge

Ask yourself the question: Do I trust God? Do I trust Him with everything? In what areas do I need to give to God and trust Him fully?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for being so worthy of my trust. Thank you for taking those tucked away places in my life of distrust and revealing areas where I need to trust you more. Let me walk in faith and obedience. Thank you for your son, Jesus, who gave me a new life. I am so grateful for your faithfulness. I love you! Amen.

Day 4

Rejoicing in Good Times

Tonya Blessing

“And when they saw the star, they were so ecstatic that they shouted and celebrated with unrestrained joy.” Matthew 2:10 (Passion Translation)

The phrase “let the good times roll” is most frequently heard during Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans, as it is a Cajun *expression*. I am not advocating Mardi Gras, but I am advocating celebrating Jesus with “unrestrained joy.”

In Matthew chapter 2, the wisemen were on a mission. A star was leading them to Christ. As Christian women, we are called and led by God to follow the Star of Christ each day. The wisemen were religious priests from Persia. It is possible that they were descendants of Daniel who prophesied about the Messiah. These men, who probably numbered more than three, were ecstatic about finding Jesus.

ec•stat•ic

Adjective - Feeling or expressing overwhelming happiness or joyful excitement.

Synonyms - enraptured, elated, euphoric, joyful, delirious, blissful

The wisemen were encountering the fulfillment of a long-awaited dream. A hope was being realized. In living out this journey of fruition, they experienced several things: they viewed a sign. They made inquiries. They learned truth. They watched and followed. They stopped and celebrated. As an expression of their joy, they presented gifts to the Savior. Their gifts were not tiny presents wrapped with bows, but, more than likely, treasure chests. Our hearts are treasure chests, and, during our times of rejoicing, we have gifts to present to Jesus.

Gold represents Christ's deity. In our seasons of rejoicing, are we expressing this core belief of our Christian faith in what we say and how we live? Frankincense represents holiness, excellence, and devotion. In our season, where the goodness of God overwhelms us, are we identifying with Christ's holiness? Are we striving to walk in His excellence with heartfelt devotion? Myrrh is an embalming spice. It represents the love of Jesus. When the blessings of God are in abundance, are we giving glory to Christ? Are we sharing our treasures and representing the Lord's love?

Challenge

Good times are part of our Christian journey. They are wonderful opportunities to reflect on God's generous and gracious nature. They are also wonderful opportunities to give testimony of how the Lord desires to bless those who serve and are faithful to Him.

Day 5
Rejoicing Through Pain
Kelly Seders

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth." Job 18:25 (NIV)

Have you ever been through a situation so painful, you didn't know how you were going to continue? Job was no stranger to pain, and he sure faced every kind imaginable. Death, rejection, physical pain, loneliness, and more. Yet his response, even after the worst of it, was to focus on Heaven.

Job knew that what he faced was only temporary, and that there was someone who had everything under control: his Redeemer, who lived. When Job's friends and family cursed and questioned God, Job declared the goodness of God and looked forward to the coming of his Savior.

Challenge

Friends, I know that some point of your life has been marked by pain, or it will be eventually. That's life in a fallen world. However, because Jesus is alive, no matter what, you can look back on those painful situations and either declare the goodness of God over them or look forward with a hopeful anticipation to His coming. The pain we face is only temporary, and like Job we can rejoice from a heavenly perspective! We don't have to have all the answers, we don't have to bear or enjoy the pain, and we don't have to pretend there is no pain. Job was raw and real and honest before God about his feelings regarding the pain. Yet, even after sharing how he felt about it all he rejoiced, because he knew His Redeemer!

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that you live. Since you live, we have hope in even the most unimaginable situations. Help us keep that heavenly perspective and rejoice through our pain, which is only temporary. Thank you that you're with us, even when our feelings don't line up with that knowledge, and that you never leave us. Amen.

Day 6

Rejoice Through Loss

Allison Blevins

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

Five years ago, I lost my mom to stage four breast cancer. I was 26 at the time, and a mom to a 18-month-old toddler and a seven-week-old newborn. It has been the hardest season I have walked through so far. Sometimes, I must catch myself nowadays from resenting God when I see others who have their moms longer than 26 years. Reality check, most people I know still have their moms here on earth. So, what can I do?

I can trust in God and not rely on my own understanding. My mom’s life verse was Proverbs 3:5-6 and she signed every card, every text, and every post with either “Love, Mom (Proverbs 3:5-6)” or “Love, Linda (Proverbs 3:5-6),” depending on her audience. She even passed away at 3:56 AM, and I believe that in her coma-like state, she was praying that she would pass at that time so that my family and I would never forget the importance of Proverbs 3:5-6. She always stressed the crucial part of not leaning on our own understanding. When we are only guided by our perception, the devil may gain a foothold in our lives, and we may eventually walk away from God. Thankfully, God is always there to welcome us back!

Moreover, my mom helped me plan her funeral before she passed. What a precious time where she and I were alone and laughing while planning her funeral! Only God can bring that sort of laughter during unimaginable pain. My mom insisted her funeral be called a “celebration of life” and it was truly that! The first song we sang during her celebration of life service was *In Jesus’ Name* by Darlene Zschech, which is an upbeat worship song that says, “I will live, I will not die, the resurrection power of Christ, alive in me, and I am free in Jesus’ name!” Imagine starting a funeral that way! I can honestly say it was the most joyful and most fun funeral I have ever attended, and I hope mine has the same feel!

The message was clear from her faith and her celebration of life: we can have joy when we belong to Christ because we will live even after death, and that is worth rejoicing!

Challenge

Where are you at with your relationship with God? Are you leaning on your own understanding or are you trusting God with whatever is thrown your way? Are you allowing the world to direct your paths or are you allowing God to direct your paths? Where do you find your source of truth and joy?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I pray that we will align ourselves with you and not lean on our understanding with whatever we face. We know that you are in control, and you are working for our good, even if we don’t comprehend the bigger picture. Give us discernment, strength, and joy as we embark on this journey of life—through the highs and lows, and all the uncertainties. We trust you with all our hearts. Amen.

Day 7

Rejoicing Amidst Change

Tonya Jewel Blessing

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." Psalm 32:8 (Passion Translation)

Head coverings or *doeks* are commonplace in South Africa. While living in Africa, on special occasions, I would don a *doek*. The cloth had to be colorful yet match my dress and needed to include an unusual touch such as flower or bow formed from the material. The adornment had to reside just above my left or right eye. The hats we wear whether physical or spiritual tell a great deal about who we are and in what season of life we're entertaining. Currently, I am hatless. Transition has a way of leaving us disoriented.

My day-to-day responsibilities in South Africa have concluded, and I am uncertain about how to find my new place in America. I am going through a metamorphosis of sorts (evolution, rebirth, alteration, mutation, transfiguration, translation). I recently viewed an illustration featuring a butterfly giving advice to a larva. "The thing is you really have to want to change." I think I am in the cocoon stage. Everything feels dark, daunting, and despondent.

The verses in Psalm 32 are powerful and have been a tremendous encouragement to me. In the Passion Translation verse eight begins with the words, "I hear the Lord saying..."

1. I will stay close to you.
2. I will instruct and guide you on the pathway for your life.
3. I will advise you along the way.
4. I will lead you forth with my eyes as your guide.
5. I will take you where you have not been before.

Verses eight and nine also include some timely words for this season in my life: don't make it difficult, don't be stubborn, don't make me tug you, don't make me pull you along. Then, verse nine concludes with the omnipotent words, *"Just come with me."*

Challenge

If you're going through a season of transition where life seems dark, daunting, and despondent. Please remember that our all-powerful God is telling you, *"Just come with me."*

Prayer

Lord, we come to you today. You know our seasons of life. You know our comings and goings. You know when we rise and when we sit. Thank you for transitions that put us on new trails for your Kingdom's sake. Thank you also for your promises. Please stay close to us and instruct and guide us. Thank you for wisdom and discernment along the way. Thank you for taking us to new places where we haven't ventured before. Lord, we don't want to be difficult or stubborn. It is our desire to just come with you. Amen.

Day 8

Rejoicing When You're Hurt by Others

Margaret Austin

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV)

Rejoicing when you have been hurt by others can be difficult and may even seem impossible. Has this ever happened to you? Was it a struggle to keep your joy? Apostle Paul's explanation of the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:7 can be used as a balm to heal the wounds of hurtfulness and open the door for rejoicing. Let's take a closer look at this verse.

The apostle Paul starts off by saying that love "bears all things." When I pray for those who have hurt me, I am inviting the Lord into the situation. I am believing in and depending on the Lord, who can do all things, to hear and answer those prayers. Since I put my hope in Him who works all things out, I can trust that He is working on my behalf to solve the situation.

Finally, "endures all things" means there will be some suffering but *endure* has an additional meaning, which is "remains in existence." The suffering has an end, and the love remains. Where does the rejoicing fit in? Understanding that Jesus has shown this kind of love throughout our walk with Him fills us with gratitude and rejoicing. We appreciate the forgiveness provided to us by the finished work on the cross. This knowledge helps us to extend that same kind of love and forgiveness to those who have hurt us whether it was intentional or not.

Challenge

We have the choice to rejoice with confidence in the Lord or hold on to the hurt. Which one will you choose?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the love, mercy, and forgiveness you extend to us every day. Help us to do the same for others. I am rejoicing in the pain, knowing that the God I serve can heal and restore relationships! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Rejoicing Through Disappointment

Ann Vikse

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!"

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NLT)

Do you ever feel like nothing is going right? How many times have you started a project that did not end up quite like you had planned? Or looked forward to something that did not turn out quite like as you expected it? Life can be full of large and small disappointments, and if we are not careful, those disappointments can lead us into a pit, called self-pit. Self-pit is anger at the world or God, giving up, and determining to never try again.

Habakkuk has just delivered a message of God's judgment over Judah for their evil ways. Everything looked like God had abandoned His people, the prophet declared. "Even though...yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!" Sometimes that is easier said than done!

Challenge

So, what are some practical ways we can learn to rejoice in disappointment?

1. Practice rejoicing when things are going well. This also helps us not take God and His blessings for granted. Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
2. Deliberately yield your plans to the Lord, trusting He wants what is best for you. If we are looking to the Lord to direct our paths, and watching for His desired outcome in every situation, it is harder to become disappointed knowing He is ultimately in control. When plans start to go in a different direction than we planned, it is easy to let fear slip in, but David wrote in Psalm 56:3, "When I am afraid, I put my trust in You." When we practice trust, it's easier to rejoice.
3. When things go wrong, don't take it personally. When your car breaks down, or you miss an important appointment, or your children are not cooperating with you, it's not personal. We live in a fallen world and the enemy is constantly trying to get our eyes off the Lord and His many blessings. When these things happen, I try to stop and whisper a quick prayer, "Lord, I know You are ultimately in control and you can turn this around for my good," (Romans 8:28).
4. Surround yourself with friends who encourage you and lift you up. Never underestimate the power of an encouraging word. When circumstances are not as I would like them to be, I have a trusted friend that I call. She knows what to say to put my focus back on the Lord and off my circumstances.
5. Last, but not least, stay in the Word! It is full of God's precious promises, has the power to redirect our thoughts, and it promotes His presence which makes everything else seem insignificant!

Prayer

Lord, when my plans don't seem to be going as I want them to, help me to not slip into disappointment. Help me to refocus on you and allow you to have ultimate control to "work all things for my good" as I keep my eyes on You! Amen.

Day 10

Rejoicing With Worship

Tierney Williamson

“Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” Psalm 95:2

Rejoicing and worship are two concepts that naturally seem to fit together. In fact, sometimes we tend to think of them as one and the same, synonyms, if you will. However, let’s take a moment to understand what these two words truly signify.

Rejoice means to “feel or show great joy or delight.” *Worship* means “the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.” When we combine these definitions, we can gain a better understanding of what the phrase, *Rejoicing with Worship* represents. We feel great joy when we express the reverence and adoration we have for God! As you read Psalm 95:2, you can almost hear the excitement of the psalmist as he is telling God’s people that there should be thanksgiving, a joyful noise, and songs of praise when we come into God’s presence.

Choosing to rejoice with worship is so much more than waiting for your church to sing your favorite song during a Sunday service; it is so much more than saying a quick “thank you” to God when something good happens. It is even more than feeling inspired during an altar call or a time of prayer. Since God sent His Son, Jesus, to save and redeem us from the penalty of death that we justly earned and deserved, we now are incredibly blessed to have access to God’s presence everywhere we go!

Through the Holy Spirit, we can spend time with our heavenly Father at any moment or in any place! Think about it. When the psalmist tells us that we can come into God’s presence, we don’t have to wait until we are at church. We can choose to rejoice with thanksgiving, reverence, adoration, and songs of praise anywhere we are, as we spend time with our precious God. He is not limited or constrained to one place; He is present in every area of our lives.

Challenge

Stop and consider: what would it look like if you took time each day to have great joy in expressing your adoration to our God? How would your attitude change if your first focus was choosing to rejoice with worship, no matter what happens during your day?

Let me encourage you. Enjoy God’s presence daily, choose to put Him first, and take every opportunity to rejoice with worship!

Prayer

Father, you are amazing! Thank you for giving us access to your presence through the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus, and by the power of your Holy Spirit. Help us to choose you first every day – to make you our primary focus no matter what happens. Teach us to rejoice with worship. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

Helping Others Rejoice

Gina Brummett

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4

Our granddaughter is entering high school and has secured a spot on the cheerleading squad. Initially, cheering was about the position, the uniform, individual strength, and abilities. Through time and training, though, the squad is a team with the purpose of cheering others on to do and be their best.

Philippians 4 looks a bit like this. Paul wrote to his friends, encouraging them to not get sidetracked by differing opinions and to rejoice as they labored and helped each other accomplish the Lord's purposes. “Help these women...” (v. 3). He cheered the “team” to **rejoice**, and he helped them with a strategy for productive and joyful living:

- Exemplify gentleness – a fruit of the Spirit (v. 5)
- Remember that Christ's return is imminent (v. 5)
- Resist anxious thoughts (v. 6)
- Be grateful (v. 6)
- Ask God for what you need (v. 6)
- Embrace peace (v. 7)
- Meditate on things that are true, noble, right, pure, etc. (v. 8) *

*If you're going through a struggle, be specific about these adjectives. Make a list and answer the questions, “What is true, pure, etc. in this situation?”

In the remaining verses of the chapter, Paul thanks the Philippians for their ongoing help and partnership: “I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me.” He acknowledges the benefits of their mutual sacrifice and reward in spreading the gospel (v. 10-20).

Challenge

Helping others rejoice is a bit like cheerleading. Let's do the Philippians 4 cheer: “Don't worry. Don't fret! Joy for the win. Let's say it again!”

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for allowing me to be a part of a team – those with whom I labor in the larger body of Christ. Please use me to encourage others and to also receive their encouragement. As we wait for your return, help us to press on to know you in unity, humility, fellowship, and peace. Amen.

Day 12

Your Joy Will Be Complete

Leslie Johnson

“Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

In Nehemiah 8, the Israelites had returned to Jerusalem from exile. The Word of God was being read and the people were filled with remorse for not living up to the law. Nehemiah told the people to stop mourning and go and rejoice for it was a holy day for honoring the Lord. Then he said the words that we are so familiar with: “For the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

I shared this with some ladies recently and one of them asked what is “the joy of the Lord?” Her question made me stop in my tracks. I mulled it over and realized that it is the Lord's joy, not mine. He rejoices over me! Our joy can be complete because His love is bigger than we can imagine. He DELIGHTS in US!

Challenge

Learn to hold on to that and your joy will be complete in Jesus.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to understand how great and how powerful your love is for us. Help us know that you rejoice in us. When we sit in your lap of love, let our joy be complete because your joy is complete in us. Amen.

Day 13

Serving With Joy

Vicki Proffitt

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:2-4

How many of us have ever prayed, “Lord, I want to be more like you?” Well, if we knew what it takes to get there, would we so readily pray that prayer? I have just gone through one of the hardest times of my life, and I am old! In the middle of the struggle, a trusted authority sent me the above scripture.

Count it all joy, serve with joy, even in the tough places. In those low, emotional places, joy is not so easily found. On those days, my joy only came through stopping everything and putting my eyes on Jesus and fixing them there. My hope. My strength. My courage. My defender. My strong tower. My confidence. My Good Shepherd. My friend that sticks closer than a brother. My Truth. He will always tell me the truth with His undying, unfailing, and unconditional love.

In my calendar planner, I have a note to myself that says, “Don’t insult God with fear.” His Word is full of promises for His children: His imperfect children. His Word ONLY brings life and light in any and every situation.

Challenge

So, rejoice! The most powerful, all-knowing, eternal, ever-present God is on your side. We are overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony!

Prayer

Amazing, amazing God who has adopted us as your children, joint heirs with Christ, you are the fountain of joy! You are more than enough. Because of You, I choose to serve with joy. Because of You, I rejoice! Thank You for who You are and what You have done for us and will continue to do for us! Amen.

Day 14

Rejoicing Through Anxiety and Depression

Liz Jans

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6

Our brains are wired to see the negative—it’s something called negativity bias. We must train our brains to think positively on a consistent basis. Just like starting a new habit or routine, learning to rejoice through anxiety and depression is something that’s practiced, something that will have to be repeated to reach a place of victory in our hearts and minds. Even when we reach that place of victory, it doesn’t mean that we won’t have setbacks or moments of overwhelm, but it does mean that we will be able to face them with more confidence and ability to combat the negative thoughts that flood our minds.

One of the first things we must do when learning to rejoice through anxiety and depression is starting to separate the lies from the truth. Satan will speak lies to us about our worth, our situations, and the power we have in Jesus. If we aren’t careful, we can be deceived into believing those things, and be pulled further down into anxiety and depression. Sometimes we can believe the lie that things will continue to be how they have always been, but when we look at the Truth, we can bring our anxieties, our dark thoughts, and our deepest hurts to God with thanksgiving. We can look at the positives and blessings that we have from God, even if they feel small in the moment.

We can work to identify what’s causing these anxious or depressive thoughts. Is it a past trauma that needs healing? Is it a current situation that feels out of your control? Is it something else? Whatever it may be, we don’t have to face it alone. We have God and the support of others whom He has placed in our lives. Connecting to those people and rejoicing with them during anxiety and depression can begin to open your eyes to new possibilities, new solutions, and a way out of the darkness!

Challenge

Learning to rejoice through anxiety and depression doesn’t always mean that those things will be gone forever, but it does mean that you will create lifelines for yourself as you work to find a way back to your true self—who God created you to be!

Prayer

Dear Lord, help me come to you with my anxious and depressive thoughts. Help me not be afraid to reach out to others during the darkness I face. Let me see the positives—the things that you have blessed me with and let me rejoice in those things! Lead me through this difficult time and back to my truest self. Amen.

Day 15

Rejoicing with Those Who Rejoice

Bethany Rosenow

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” Romans 12:15

In Romans chapter 12, Paul teaches us how to treat one another and reminds us that since we have seen and received Christ’s love and mercy, we need to “rejoice with those who rejoice” and “mourn with those who mourn.” This is one way that God’s love can flow through us to others.

To rejoice with someone who is rejoicing or mourn with someone who is mourning, we must first sincerely love and have empathy toward one another. Empathy is having the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It flows out of a humble, loving heart. At times, it might require setting aside our own personal feelings, pain, or struggles to focus on those we love.

This can be especially difficult if someone’s joy causes you pain. When blessings that we have prayed for are poured out on those around us while we are in a season of weeping, pain, or even waiting, it is tempting to become bitter or jealous.

Challenge

Sincerely love one another in every season of life. Look for opportunities to understand and share the feelings of others. If rejoicing with those who rejoice is painful, take your pain to God. Ask Him to give you strength and peace and help you to trust in His plan. Recall the many ways God has blessed you. Remember that He is faithful, good, and trustworthy.

If you are in a season of rejoicing, rejoice! But remember to be sensitive to the fact that your joy may cause others pain. Compassion and empathy can flow both ways between those who are rejoicing and mourning. We can follow Jesus’ example by showing love to others right where they are in life.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for setting the perfect example of how to love others. Please help me to have a sincere, loving, and humble heart so that I can love others well, even when that means setting aside my own struggles and pain to help them rejoice. Thank you for the many blessings that give me reasons to rejoice every day. Help me to be sensitive to those who might be in pain when I am rejoicing. Use me to remind them of your goodness and faithfulness and show them your love.

Amen.

Day 16

Rejoicing Among Little Feet

Ruth Thompson

“... so the next generation would know them, even to the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.” Psalm 78:6

As custom, when we returned from visiting my parents in Colorado, I called my mother to let her know we had arrived back home. My mother expressed that the house seemed to quiet with everyone gone. That day she had set to washing windows, and when she came to the sliding glass door, she saw the small handprints of our 18-month-old son. She decided to keep the memories a little longer and washed around the handprints. I'm so glad my mother saw the handprints with joy in her heart.

At times, I look at the handprints on the window and instead of joy, I get bogged down with one more chore. I need God to put a permanent little handprint on my heart to remind me of the great importance of my task to teach those with little feet and little hands because it will continue from generation to generation. I need to teach them to put their trust in God, not to forget His wonderful works, and to keep his commandments. When I think about God's plan for children, He gives me a new purpose with joy in my heart, a spring in my step, and life in my hands to do my tasks in a way that will bring glory to Him. I need to model this with love and joy.

Challenge

I will commit to rejoice each day as I teach these little ones to put their trust in God. I will remember what a privilege God has given me to raise and nurture those with little feet around me while rejoicing.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, please give me your heart for those with little feet. Help me to determine that I will teach and care for them with a right attitude and joy in my heart. When times of impatience or little handprints on windows cause me to tire, help me remember they are your precious little ones. Help me to see the importance of the responsibility you have given me to teach them, so they in turn will tell their children . . . to the next generation. Amen.

Day 17

The Joy of Sacrifice

Juanita Blevins

“As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God.” 2 Timothy 4:16

I woke at 1:30 am, built a cabin fire, enjoyed a cup of coffee, and read through the books of I & II Timothy. Once again, the Word of God was faithful to cut through the chaos in my brain. I bowed low during prayer and felt prompted to give myself as an offering “to be poured out.” I had no idea of what “being poured out” meant, but I had a deep sense God was using Paul’s words to prepare me for what would lay ahead. Oswald Chambers once said, “We act like pagans in a crisis—only one out of an entire crowd is daring enough to invest his faith in the character of God.”

The joy of sacrifice is realizing that in times of being poured out, indeed, suffering in body, mind, or soul, we can remain confident, steadfast, and yes, even joyful in the purifying fire—moving past our shallowness and experience new depths of knowing our Lord and Savior. However, going through difficult times, unprovoked attacks, and personal anguish does not always make one a better person, it can either bring us to the end of ourselves or destroy us. Causing us to be bitter or better. The choice is ours. Will we choose to be beautifully exposed or be revealed as a pagan?

Whether our day be pleasant or whether challenges arise, scripture is clear that true joy transcends circumstances. Shall we ask our father to save us from these circumstances? Or do we instead offer ourselves to be poured out as an offering, purified through the fire? As a Christ-follower, we can ask God to help us be the Godly women He has called us to be, asking that His ways will flow from us, that His Spirit will flow out of us in mighty ways for His Glory, so His will and His ways may be accomplished.

Challenge

Prayer is the key to perception and the Holy Spirit gives us depth perception. Jacob may have said it best, “Surely the Lord was in this place, and I was not aware,” (Genesis 28:16). We don’t see the world as it is, we see the world as we are. Will we remain content in God only if our world is pleasant? Or can you join with Paul and offer to be poured out as an offering finding real joy in the sacrifice?

Prayer

Lord, let me be brave enough to say YES to you and your ways and be “undone” in your presence as you purify my heart. Lord, keep my mouth closed until You open it and then may I only speak life! Speak love! Speak joy! Lord, guard me against spewing poison and falling into the enemy’s trap of causing division. Lord, I am offering myself to be poured out as an offering for your glory. Amen.

Rejoicing Together

Melanie Aragon

“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’” Revelation 5:13

When I think of the phrase “rejoicing together,” I think of all the different occasions we celebrate throughout our lives—a marriage, the birth of a baby, new jobs, graduations, first words, birthdays, and multiple others. I recently went to a good friend’s wedding, and I love to watch the bride come down the aisle and see her face. However, the best part is the groom’s face. I see the love abound and the gladness of the moment, just for a few precious seconds. Then, I glance around and see the faces of the guests. They are filled with smiles and joy. In that moment, everyone is rejoicing over this unity.

These are all great things to celebrate and rejoice over with our friends and family.

However, I am also reminded of the great rejoicing that will be coming to those of us who have accepted Christ as our Savior. The Coming of the Lord! We will be rejoicing together when that day comes. Revelations 5:13 tells us that EVERY creature in heaven and earth praised Him. This is what is to come. We will be worshipping and praising Him together. I never want to have a birthday party all alone, and I sure don’t want to praise and rejoice alone either. I want to bring my friends and family with me to sit at the throne of Jesus. God has intended from the beginning of time for us to be together, and he does not want us to stop!

Challenge

Today we may rejoice together in earthly things, but soon the Lord will come again for us to rejoice together with Him. As you begin or end your day, I challenge you to think about those that don’t know the Lord. Begin to pray for them daily. Pray that they will come to know Christ and that they will have a desire to praise Him. Invite them to rejoice with you at church and believe in God’s amazing grace and mercy!

Prayer

Lord, thank you today for the many things in my life where I can rejoice. Thank you for people with whom I can rejoice and celebrate. But most of all, thank you Lord for the promise that I will be in your presence, praising you for ever and ever! Amen.

Joy In His Presence

Chris Griffin

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” Revelation 21:3-4 NIV

The Holy Place in the Tabernacle and later the Temple featured a vessel called the Table of Showbread. On this golden rack, the priests weekly placed 12 loaves of bread to represent the tribes of Israel before the Lord—a reminder that they were always in His presence, always on His mind.

When I visited the Temple Institute in Jerusalem (www.templeinstitute.org), the docent related a thought I will never forget. She said that Jewish tradition records that when the priests came to replace the week-old bread, it was as fresh and hot as the day it was placed on the Table. In God’s presence, there is no decay. We live in a broken world. We experience loss and trouble and difficult seasons. Sometimes those seasons are seemingly endless. Or just when we think we have healed, and a memory pops up and spirals us back into the dark.

But when we rest in the presence of God, there is no decay. There is no chaos. There is no brokenness. Your spirit is satisfied with the benefit of escaping our broken world and dwelling in God’s perfection.

There will be a day when we exit this world and step into God’s realm where He reigns. There, no brokenness, loss, shame, chaos, or darkness will enter. What a beautiful time we look forward to! We anchor our hearts in that great hope. However, until that day comes, we are not without help. God offers us a resting place in His presence here, where He shields us from the effects of the brokenness and reminds us that this world is not our home. Will you choose to prioritize a daily time of communication with Him and meditation on His Word so that you might rest in that peaceful, joyful place?

Challenge

What greater joy than to taste what heaven will be! The fulfillment of the longings of your heart. Nothing broken, nothing missing, only wholeness, only peace, only Jesus. Today will you allow God to take you there, feel the joy, and experience the hope?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the reality that in Your presence there is no decay. I experience brokenness all around me, and I want to draw into Your place where there is wholeness and restoration. Please help me trust you more, to dive deeper into my relationship with you, experience the healing of being with you, and the joy that I find in your presence alone. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 20
Joyful In Hope
Dawn Bryant

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” Romans 12:12

I have had many opportunities to learn patience, to remain confident, and to keep praying. Our family has faced over six years of remaining steadfast in prayer and trusting in the Lord to lead our adult son back home. I have lost sleep, felt weariness like I've never felt, and at times hopeless due to unbelievable circumstances.

This is how I fought through one of the darkest times in our lives as a family. Fear would overtake at times, but then I would rejoice in knowing that the Lord would make a way for our son. I would sing and pray out loud the promises of God over him when I didn't know his whereabouts. One of my favorite songs to worship to is, *God Turn It Around* by Church of the City. It was as if God himself was reaching through to my heart through the words, “cause all my hope is in the name, the name of Jesus. Breakthrough will come, come in the name, the name of Jesus. He is moving mountains, making a way for someone, God is doing something right now.”

Challenge

It's easy to believe that God isn't working at our lowest and most difficult times. But it's completely the opposite. He is working things out. He is moving, and He will move that mountain that seems so dark and scary. He will silence the lies of the enemy over the loved ones in your life as you continue to rejoice in the hope we have in Jesus. He will give you the patience needed to stand on the Truth of God's word for that trouble you face. Keep on praying because we have hope in the most powerful name of Jesus. God will turn it around, keep on praying.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to always rely on the hope that comes through trusting you. Grant me the perseverance to always believe that you are always working. Amen.

Day 21

Rejoicing in God's Will

Lindsay Polanco

"Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised." Hebrews 10:36

Being in the will of God can be messy. I've had moments in my life while in His will where I feel at peace and joyful, but I have also experienced moments of envy and bitterness under the same circumstances. In these moments, we can choose to move through His will with bitterness or with a joyful heart. Our current situations or selfish desires will tell us we are alone, that we deserve better, or even we deserve to be "happy." By lingering in bitterness or discontentment in the Lord's path, we are selfishly choosing our own will and pausing God's will.

Choosing to rejoice is planting trust in our God with surrender, humbleness, and a heart of obedience. His scripture says patient endurance is what you need to continue His will. Girlfriend, it's hard to be patient sometimes. In a world where everything is instantly handed to us, or we are so easy to write people or things out of our lives, we struggle with patience the most. Have confidence that God has you in the palm of His hand, right where he wants you.

Challenge

Are you enduring through His will with joy, or are you enduring through His will with bitterness? There will be times in our lives we won't agree or want to continue where He has placed us; however, we must trust He holds the future and not our will but His be done.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for directing my path today. Though my circumstances may not be comfortable at times, I rejoice in who my maker is. Thank you for your steadfast love, patience, and designing my future for goodness. I pray for a heart that rejoices while I walk through your will. May all that I am and all I do be pleasing unto you, Father, Amen!

Rejoicing Through Bitterness

Lori Tapparo

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Psalm 16:11

Have you ever been in the place where bitterness is completely stealing your joy? Has the enemy convinced you that holding onto an offense or pain is the right thing to do, or maybe that you *deserve* to hold onto it? Too often we look at our circumstances or our offenses and allow them to dictate our joy. The good news is that the Lord is our source of true joy and being connected to Him in his presence is all we need to obtain it. Joy comes from being focused on the Lord, not our circumstances, our offenses, or our feelings. Finding joy through our bitterness is an attitude of the heart. We find Joy when we are dependent upon the Lord and recognize his handprint in our situation.

Harboring bitterness, not working towards restoration, is contrary to God's will for you. God's Word tells us that we must forgive others just as he has forgiven us. When we don't forgive others, we are actively demonstrating that we don't really understand what Christ has done for us (we are not offended enough at our own sin). Holding onto bitterness so tightly places distance between you and others and God.

Joy is not the absence of pain; it is the presence of God! The Joy of the Lord is our strength.

Challenge

I would challenge you to ask the Lord if you are holding onto any bitterness. Be willing to be obedient to give forgiveness where it is needed and feel the weight of burden fall off your shoulders. Giving forgiveness releases the power it has over you.

Prayer

Lord, I ask that you search our hearts and show where we need to give forgiveness. Lord please how show us how to pull bitterness from our hearts at the root. Give us strength to forgive and rely on you to fill us with total joy that only comes from you, our loving Heavenly Father. Amen.

Day 23

Joy Over Repentance

Karin Heckathorn

“But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So, all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 (CSB)

Repentance (*metanoia*, Greek) literally means “to change one’s mind.” Well, that’s so simple. I will just change my mind, and all will be well with my soul. Are you hearing the sarcasm here?

Joy (*chara*, Greek) means “a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.” It is important to note that joy (*chara*) is a gift from God. This means joy is not a human-based happiness that comes and goes. Let’s see how we can marry these two words with the scripture above.

A recent moment of personal repentance was certainly not joy-filled. I was sitting alone at my kitchen table, contemplating this question: “Has Jesus been lost in my shadow?” My answer was a resounding, “YES.” Unforgiveness, greed, competition, pride, and selfishness flooded my mind. Past and present responses to people, attitudes, over-reactions, and under-reactions coursed through my thoughts. I was wrecked by sobbing and tears. I was undone.

Joy came upon me immediately after my repentance. I was free to love people I had held at arm’s length. God Himself encapsulated my mind and emotions. I was now full of His joy and freedom.

Challenge

Theologian/poet, Rowan Williams, said: “Self-justification is the heavy burden, because there is no end to carrying it; there will always be some new situation where we need to establish our position, dig the trench of the ego to defend...Self-accusation, honesty about our failings, is the light burden because whatever we have to face in ourselves, however painful is the recognition, however hard it is to feel at times that we have to start all over again, we know the burden is already known and accepted by God’s mercy. We do not have to create, sustain, and save ourselves: God has done, is doing and will do all.”

Prayer

And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. AMEN.

Day 24

Overwhelming Joy

Hannah Rowell

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind .This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Matthew 22:37-39 NIV

Overwhelming...usually when we hear that word it's in a negative sense:

- "I am so overwhelmed with the kids."
- "My job is overwhelming."
- "It's overwhelming to try and find time for my marriage during everything."
- "The housework is overwhelming me."
- "I'm overwhelmed in ministry."
- "Life is overwhelming."

But what about when we say OVERWHELMING JOY? What does that mean? A synonym for overwhelming is *overpowering*, and when we are talking joy, that's what we want. We want the joy of the Lord to overpower everything else that is overwhelming us. Is this possible? Is there a formula for this?

In this scripture above we find our answer and our formula. When we love God above all else, and when we prioritize the needs of others above our own, we will be able to walk in His overwhelming joy, a joy that will overpower all that overwhelms.

Since the time our kids were little, my husband has taught them to put God first, others second, and finally themselves with the JOY acronym:

J – Jesus
O – Others
Y – You

Challenge

Today I challenge you to walk in this J (Jesus) O (others) Y (yourself) and see how God uses it to bring his overwhelming Joy to your life.

Prayer

*Dear Lord, help us today to love you with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.
Help us to put you above all else. Help us to love and serve those around us. Amen.*

Day 25
Choosing Joy
Susan Cassell

“Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.” Habakkuk 3:18

This scripture is not just a statement; it is a declaration—I WILL.

Choosing to rejoice when God has blessed us should be our first response. Choosing to be joyful when our lives are in a normal routine is recognition of his faithfulness. However, when our problems are mounting, when we have failed miserably or others have failed us, choosing joy is a sacrifice, an aroma pleasing to God.

The prophet named Habakkuk lived during a violent time. He cried out to God recognizing the disobedience of his people and the destruction that was upon them. Because of this disobedience, they were experiencing evil in the land and the horrors of war. This devastation is described in verse 17, “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls...” This means there was no food of any kind, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, and nothing to wear. An invading army was violently taking possession of the land. Even though all this was happening, Habakkuk knew God, and he declared his decision to rejoice in the Lord.

When we experience trauma or destruction in our lives like Habakkuk, we must put our hope in Jesus. Hope opens the door to faith, and faith provides an avenue to rejoice. Through our limited understanding of everything in our lives and our society, we can determine to rejoice in the Lord and be joyful in God our Savior!

Challenge

Joy is a choice. It is a choice we can make in the small things and in the life-altering things. Choosing joy doesn’t change our circumstances. It will change our attitude. Focus on God, take joy in His presence and worship Him there. Choose Joy!

Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to find hope in you by the power of your Holy Spirit, even in our darkest days. Help us in our personal walk with you, to stay close to your side and stay in your Word. Help us to continually take joy in your presence and know in our hearts you are our salvation. Amen.

Day 26

When You Don't Feel Like Rejoicing

Amanda Robinson

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Philippians 4:4

Let's be honest. There are times in life when we simply don't "feel" like rejoicing. Sometimes in our circumstances feeling joy is the farthest thing from our hearts. Sometimes there isn't a big stressor in life, no tragedy or crisis we're dealing with, and we still don't feel like rejoicing.

According to the dictionary, to rejoice is "to show in behavior great joy or delight." Rejoicing to a level that it shows in our behavior, generally requires conditions causing us to *feel* joyful or delighted. When Paul admonishes his readers in Philippians 4:4 to "Rejoice in the Lord always" he was in prison. He had endured a life filled with hardships and yet, he tells us to rejoice. His circumstances certainly didn't call for rejoicing. But notice he says rejoice in *the Lord*. Not in circumstances. Not in people. Not in our marriage or children. Not in our job. Not because we feel like it. Rejoice in the Lord. Because He alone can be our source of joy and delight, regardless of circumstances or whether we *feel* joyful.

Our world today tells us feelings are, and should be, our guiding truth. If we don't feel like it, don't do it. If it feels bad, it is wrong. If it feels good, it must be right. Feelings have replaced the Holy Spirit. And that is a scary prospect!

Challenge

Let's face it. We're not always going to feel like rejoicing. In fact, God promised us we would experience a life that did not evoke feelings of joy (John 16:33). Regardless, God never commands us to do anything that would harm us. Rather His commands bring life! So, when you don't feel like rejoicing, turn on some praise music, go to your prayer closet, call a friend for encouragement, write out a scripture, contemplate the cross, ask God to fill you with His gift of joy! He will not disappoint.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we are so thankful that YOU are our source of joy. Help us when we don't feel like rejoicing to trust that even in those moments you are for us and are moving on our behalf. Give us joy unspeakable and full of Glory. Amen.

Day 27

The Joy Set Before Christ

Ashley Varner

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:2

Jesus is our perfect example of having joy during difficult times. Our Savior went through the pain and shame of hanging on the cross. Not only was the cross physically painful, but it was emotionally humiliating. As Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice, he was ridiculed and mocked. He was the Chosen One. He had been chosen to bear the penalty of the sin of all mankind. Talk about a difficult assignment!

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus “endured the cross.” In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was determined to follow the will of His Father and He was able to endure this enormous task by focusing on “the joy set before him.” What was the joy He was so focused on? It was you. Jesus looked forward to the joy of you and me. His love for us was the reason He was able to endure the cross.

God is a God of reconciliation and love. His desire to make a way for you to be with Him far outweighed the pain and shame of enduring the cross. Thankfully, the cross was not the end of the story. We know Jesus rose again on the third day and is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. And that, my friend, is the joy that is set before you and me!

When you are facing difficult times, when it seems like you’re having to endure pain and shame, focus on the joy that is set before you: one day being united with the One who has saved you!

Challenge

Find a friend today and share with them the joy-filled truth that they were the joy that was set before Him as He was enduring the cross.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the Truth that when you were on the cross, the thought of me brought joy to you. Thank you for being with me through times of suffering and shame. Help me to cling to you, the author and perfecter of my faith, as I strive to look forward to the joy you have set before me. I love you, Lord. Amen.

Day 28

Working For the Lord with Joy

Morgan McNaughton

“Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!” Psalm 100:2

Have you ever caught yourself saying, “If I can just get through this week,” in those busy moments? I know I have! As women, we can wear so many different hats, but when I pause, I realize I don’t want to just get through it. I want to embrace what God has called me to and serve with joy.

Whether it is in your job, at home with your family, or in your marriage, God has placed you there for a reason. Don’t let the enemy rob you of the joy God has for you in this season. We occasionally find ourselves grumbling about the very things for which we prayed.

Complaining is not harmless; it’s addictive and a thief that steals our joy.

Shift your attitude to a place of joy and gratitude--joy for the added pressures, joy in the stretch of the work in which we have been called, joy for the chaotic season of unexpected blessing and opportunity.

Challenge

We want to have a heart overflowing with joy and gratitude, always rejoicing in God’s plan. Realizing that every day is a miracle, your kids are a blessing, your marriage is a gift – you are exactly where God wants you to be in this moment. Open doors don’t stay open when we start to resent them for the responsibility they bring to your life. Sometimes we don’t need less on our plate; we need to make the choice to enjoy the stretch. Crush the path in front of you with an attitude of joy and gratitude!

Prayer

Lord, I know life can sometimes feel overwhelming and even too much. Help me find the joy in this season. Give me the courage to press in even when I am resistant to what you are doing in my life. May your joy radiate through me as I serve, bringing you glory in everything I do. I choose to enjoy the stretch, knowing you are right beside me every step of the way! In Jesus’ name, amen.

Day 29

Rejoicing in Faithfulness

Audra Richardson

“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

Numbers 23:19

If I was to ask you to come up with a name of someone in your life that has always been faithful, no matter what, who would it be? Does anyone come to mind? I think most of us might have a difficult time thinking of someone who is perfectly faithful. The world we live in seems full of people who mostly look out for themselves, regardless of what they have said or promised. There is only one who is true, faithful, and good. In a world that is faithless, God is always faithful. Faithfulness is a part of His identity, not just His actions. Without it He would not be God. Being unfaithful would go against His very nature.

God will fulfill the promises that God has spoken to you. When God speaks, He will act on it. The word of God assures us of this repeatedly. God is always faithful and true. Sometimes I find myself impatient and even questioning this. Especially when I have been waiting a long time. In those moments, I must remember God's timing is perfect and He is not always on my time clock. It's like the old saying, “He is never late, but always there just in time.” He is always faithful!

Challenge

No matter what season of life you find yourself in, I want to challenge you to begin thanking God for His past faithfulness, His present faithfulness, and His faithfulness for your future. I rejoice in His faithfulness daily. I find it helps remind me of what He has done, is doing, and will do in my coming days.

Prayer

Dear Lord, I want to thank you for you being the same yesterday, today, and forever! I thank you that you have taken care of me in my past, in my present, and that you hold my future. No matter the mountain or valley I face, you are there. I rejoice that you are faithful in your very nature. Amen

Day 30

The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength

Kelly Preston

“Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

The audience this passage was originally speaking to was wrestling with following God’s laws while living in a fallen world. The struggle was as real for them as it is for us today. The day-to-day can be hard enough, but adding trials, stress, uncertainty, and grief can cause us to feel like we might collapse under the pressure.

Nehemiah reminds us that our source of strength comes from God. In fact, he says, “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” The joy of the Lord becomes an anchor to our sanity when the storms of life threaten our stability. Joy is not simply an emotion; it is a determined, hope-filled confidence that Christ is our refuge. When the storms rage and threaten to push us around, our feet are anchored, and our footing is secure.

Joy restores our hope when doubts surface in our lives. Joy strengthens us to face all kinds of adversity, even our worst fears. Joy holds our position in Christ so that we remember our identity in Him. Joy opens our eyes to see Christ’s work redeem what has been lost. Joy renews our strength so that we can keep walking, keep trusting, and keep looking for the promises of our Savior. Joy reminds us that Christ is the One and Only.

Let Nehemiah’s words call out to your heart and remind you that, “The joy of the Lord is *your* strength.”

Challenge

What would your day or week be like if you could see how your life is anchored in the joy of the Lord? Would you pray a little more intently? Would you sing a little louder? Would your attitude reflect more steadfast patience?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I need you. Please open my eyes to see how my life is anchored in your love and grace. You are the author and finisher of my faith, and there is nothing that can stall your plan for my life...hallelujah!! Please renew your strength in my whole being today. Jesus, you are the One and Only, and it is in your Name I pray, amen.