

joy



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My fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties, see it as an invaluable opportunity to experience the greatest joy that you can! For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up in you the power of endurance.

James 1:2-3 (TPT)

Joy is something we all deeply desire in our lives, transcending mere happiness to touch the very essence of our being. It is a profound state of emotional and spiritual fulfillment that enriches our daily experiences. *But how many of us truly experience authentic joy?*

This question invites us to reflect on the nature of joy—how it differs from fleeting moments of happiness and what it means to cultivate a lasting sense of joy within ourselves. True joy, often referred to as the joy of the Lord, is a divine gift that sustains us through life's trials and tribulations. It is not dependent on external circumstances but rather rooted in a deep and abiding relationship with our faith, our community, and ourselves.

This joy provides us with the strength to face challenges, to overcome obstacles, and to spread positivity to those around us. Through its pages of this e-book, may you discover keys to unlocking a joyful existence that uplifts your spirit and enhances your journey.

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Chapter 1

The Joy Of Extravagant Faith

by Adrienne Tietz

Ingrid and I went to the mountains as a symbolic act of faith of crossing our mountains into God's promises and inheritance for us.

Nature always has a way of connecting me deeper to God. When I look at His handiwork as Creator, I remember that He is an amazing Artist and All-Powerful. Sure enough when we were surrounded by mountains, I felt whisked away from my day-to-day circumstances and repositioned in the middle of God's grandeur. If God as Creator could create such magnificence, then God is able to intervene in my life, too. He's not bound by time, space, or earth's limitations. He's above it. Being in that setting while asking God to renew my faith was like a reset, a reminder that God's promises never, never fail.

At one point, we drove through an area called Peaceful Valley while listening to *The Blessing* (Hebrew version). I felt God's Presence so strongly. His goodness as a Father to us is all-encompassing. He loves to bless and give; it is

His very nature. Someone once said that we can never outgive God, and I completely agree. Sometimes, promises tarry. We don't know why, but we know that God's promises always prevail eventually.

Keeping our faith in God's promises is a way that we can bless God. When we don't see the promises yet, we get the opportunity to believe. The more impossible it seems to be, the greater the opportunity to grow in faith. Every single aspect of God and of our walk with Him requires faith. We pray to a God we don't yet see. We believe in a city that is yet to come. We wait, but we wait in hope.

When weak in faith, I ask God to help me and to give me a reset. I'm thankful He did that through the extravagant faith journey. I pray He does the same for you!

The Joy Of Extravagant Faith (part II)

by Ingrid Maddock

Adrienne and I headed to Colorado and the notion of moving a mountain was deeply symbolic for me, hinting at a physical act of declaration in a place of elevated significance.

This trip became a pursuit of understanding and embodying the essence of joy through extravagant faith. Our time in Colorado unfolded with unexpected challenges, testing our resolve and pushing us to navigate through unforeseen obstacles. It felt as if we were traversing a treacherous path, struggling to maintain our spiritual grounding amidst the chaos.

In the middle of intense frustration and weariness, I engaged the Father in vulnerable conversation. A profound realization dawned on me - the key to unlocking joy through extravagant faith lies in cultivating a spirit of gratitude in moments of stillness. Silence is a golden opportunity to shift perspective and open our hearts to the better way.

I discovered that a truly grateful heart serves as a gateway to intimate connection, enabling us to embrace faith in its most extravagant form. This revelation stemmed from a shift in perspective illuminating the transformative power of gratitude.

Chapter 2

The Joy Of Others First

by Karen Martin

Jesus was the Holy One, the King of Glory who left His heavenly home to come to save a people for Himself. Relationship is the one thing on the Godhead's heart. The plan to create human beings in His likeness to have relationship is at the center of the heart of God. Jesus being God and Man showed us the way. He could have done what He needed to do without man but He chose to bring into His earthly life weak, immature, flawed humans and have relationship with them. He put up with their lack of understanding, their bickering, and all their imperfections. He chose to love and include them to the point that in Hebrews 12:2 it says that "for the joy set before Him He endured the cross." We are that joy for which He endured the cross.

Relationship with us is the joy that was set before Him. This example has been moving people to give their lives to Jesus for over two thousand years. Over and over again, Jesus told His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. In the gospel of John, Jesus speaks of love

about fifty times. He especially tells them to love one another in chapters thirteen to seventeen multiple times.

We cannot do this life alone, nor were we created to do so. We were created for relationship, first with God, and then with one another. There is joy in true fellowship. True joy can only come from being in authentic, sincere relationships with others. Sometimes we experience pain from being in relationship with others and this causes us to withhold ourselves from fellowship. Don't let this happen.

We cannot be like Jesus or have the fullness of the abundant life He has for us without intimate relationships with other believers. In these relationships, we find strength, support, joy, and so much more. In these relationships, we can rejoice with those who rejoice.

I love the scene from *"The Chosen"* where Peter is desperate due to some of his own mistakes and some things that have happened to him. He goes fishing and is crying out to God without an answer. He comes ashore, and Jesus is there. Jesus instructs him to let down his net. Peter, being tired and discouraged, is resistant. As Jesus

just looks at him and waits, Peter finally does as Jesus said. The boat tips to one side with the net being so full of fish that it is sinking the boat. Next is the part I love: His fellow fishermen came running to help! They received the blessing of the miracle along with Peter.

I have had my own miracle. The friends that were with me when the miracle took place were filled with as much joy as I was. They were overwhelmed with excitement and joy at the work of God in my life. Even today, as I am still friends with some of them, it is a memory that continues to bring all of us joy. You can never know the wonder of these kinds of encounters and sharing in the miracles of the Lord unless you are in intimate relationship with other believers. God has created us for relationship with Himself and with others.

My encouragement to you is that if you have been withdrawn and self-protecting and not allowing yourself to be in deep, authentic relationship, you should turn to the Lord. I know that if you allow the Lord to touch the pain and bring healing you will be free to trust and allow true fellowship to come back into your life. We have need of deep, intimate relationships in order to experience the

abundant life that has been promised to us by the Lord. Finding joy in relationship with others is a great gift. Don't let past hurts isolate you. And don't allow the enemy to lie to you and tell you that you don't need deep relationships. The enemy is just trying to keep you from the fullness of all the Lord has intended for you.

I have had both pain and joy in relationships. I choose to continue to love and put my heart into having intimate and deep relationships. I choose life! As we choose to have authentic, deep relationships, we find a secret place of joy that only comes from loving and serving others. I have had to come out of not allowing others in.

I have found joy in doing life with other believers. I know you can find ways to share your life with others. You can look for a place to serve, whether in the community or in the church. I also think doing childlike activities with friends helps to lighten our adult load. Some ideas are flying a kite, taking a walk, playing games, doing a girls get away. You could do a game night or a movie. In all that you do, let go and enjoy the time you have with family and friends. Laugh often! Really set your heart toward

loving others, and let the joy of relationship with others be released in your life.

The Joy Of Others First (part II)

by Sissy Reese

There is something that happens in our hearts when we take our focus off ourselves and place it on Jesus and others. When we do this, we get an opportunity to pour out the love of Jesus by serving others. This does not have to be a grand gesture either. It could simply be acknowledging someone as you pass by them. Everyone has a desire to be seen, to be known, and to be loved. What a difference we could make if we decided to live our lives with intentionality and look for and listen to the Holy Spirit for opportunities to love someone. I am not as good at this as I would like to be, however, I am working on it. I tend to go throughout my days so quickly from one thing to the next trying to accomplish a lot in a small amount of time that I hardly notice my surroundings.

I serve with a local ministry several times a month. The leader always mentions to us that it would be a great idea to have something in our cars to offer to the person standing on the street corner. He says he has been guilty of pulling up next to someone and trying to avoid making eye contact because there was nothing he had to offer. I,

too, have found myself in a similar place. I have stopped on occasion, but not as many times as I would like. One day there was a gentleman on the corner with a sign that said something about working for diapers and food. I did not have any cash or anything in my car to give so I avoided looking in his direction.

This happened a second time. Frustrated with myself because I want to be prepared and wasn't, I asked the Lord to give me another chance. About a week or so later, I was serving with the local ministry and I told the leader about the man on the corner and how twice I had seen him and did not stop. I told him the next time I see this man; I was going to make a point to stop. The next morning, I had some errands to run and at the last minute I decided to go wash my car. As I exited the interstate, there the man was, holding the sign asking for diapers. I was so happy I thought I was going to cry. I rolled down the window and told the man that I had no money but asked if I could go and buy him some diapers. He said that would be great and told me he needed newborn size. I told him that I would be back and I drove off. I just kept thanking the Lord for another opportunity to help this man. I bought the diapers and wrote down the

information for the food pantry and the phone number for the ministry before I headed back.

I pulled up with the diapers and apologized that I did not ask his name or introduce myself (I had been so grateful for the opportunity that my senses had escaped me). After introductions, I shared the ministry information and told him about the food pantry. He told me that he did not like to ask for help. I reassured him that the ministry exists to help others. I told him we understand that situations happen to us all and that we just want to help. To date, he has not contacted the ministry. I hope that my kindness towards him allows him to call if he needs to. I also hope that he felt seen and loved. I do not know what it is like to struggle to the degree that I would need to stand on a street corner with a sign and ask for help. It takes such vulnerability to ask for help.

I am so grateful that the Lord allowed me another chance to see this man and stop. It truly blessed me to help. I encourage you to look for ways to make a difference in someone else's life. I promise that you will have such joy as you serve others. No act of kindness is too small.

Chapter 3

The Joy Of Adventure

by Victoria Sandage

We wanted to get together to kick off our focus on adventure. It was very last minute (some would say spontaneous), the weather unpredictable, and actually rain was in the forecast for just about every hour we would be together. But the three of us knew we wanted to be outside if we could. A few days prior, I felt a desire rise up to start doing my firepit again. So as we were texting back and forth on what to do, I threw out the idea of meeting at my house outside with the firepit.

Later, I found out the thought of coming over to my house on the chilly spring night to hang out in my living room by the fire had already crossed one of my girlfriend's minds. Better yet to be outside like we all really wanted, and if it rained we could always move inside. We could make this happen.

Supplies to make s'mores (a staple in our house) were already on hand and just that day I had mixed up some bubble solution for my grandkids and now envisioned the

three of us worshipping together and dancing around the yard with our bubble wands.

We were excited to be together. Our darling whimsical creative friend brought us something unique and crafty, an adventure book for us to work on. Some of us aren't too artsy-craftsy, so we need all the help we can get! It would be fun to work on this little project to get our adventure juices flowing. The night was just perfect with intimate conversation, laughter, unity in prayer, stories, and yes, dancing with bubbles.

God met us on so many levels. We were invited into a prophetic act. As we each picked up a large, dead, dried out, piece of wood and tossed it into the fire, we declared that we were casting those burned, dried, and dead places in our hearts into the consuming fire of God, to be consumed by the fire of His Love, to be no more.

This would be a Divine Exchange: the old dead, dry places in our hearts for Holy Spirit Joy for our spirits, for new life. In front of the burning fire and heat, we each declared out loud, we would now be able to experience... the fresh watering, fresh rains of God, for refreshing and new growth and new life to come.

As we finished up our declarations and soaking in His Presence with one another, we began to feel little raindrops pitter patter upon us. The rains were coming! Why were we not surprised?

My Love responded and said to me, *Arise, my dearest, my beauty, and come away with me. Don't you see? The winter is done. The rains and clouds have come and gone. The flowers are unfolding in the fields; the birds are warming up their songs, The cooing of the turtledove is heard throughout the land. The fig trees are bringing forth their first fruit, and the vines are in blossom, filling the air with their fragrance. So arise my dearest, my beauty, and come away with me.* Song of Solomon 2:10-13 (Voice)

The Joy Of Adventure (part II)

by Anoushka Riley

It has been such a joy and delight to grow daily in experiencing this wondrous intimacy with Abba Father. In particular, Psalm 84:10 reveals my heart about the Joy of intimacy with Him. It says "for just one day of intimacy with the Abba Father is like a thousand days of joy rolled into one." I just love that my intimacy with Abba is an everyday Joy adventure. This Spring, the Lord put a desire in my heart to visit my family in Curacao, a Caribbean island north of South America, even in the midst of the pandemic. It was really bold, risky, and at the same time exhilarating to say yes to His invitation to travel abroad.

My whole trip was wonderfully filled with so many unexpected joy experiences and all kinds of adventures. One special intimate joy moment was when I was swimming in the beautiful aqua beach of Porto Marie, amidst the coral reef. I was joyously surprised by three yellow and black striped angel or sergeant fish that loved swimming beside me, and I wasn't even snorkeling. Later on, it looked like they brought their whole family to join me, and I was surrounded by many different beautiful

tropical fish. I was overwhelmed with joy and in awe over all His beautiful creation.

The Holy Spirit awakened in me a new sense of appreciation and joy for the little things. I was taking it all in and I felt very special to Abba, His pleasure was ministering joy to my heart. A couple of scripture verses that came to mind were Zechariah 4:10, which says not to despise the day of small things, but rejoice (paraphrased), and Psalm 4:7, which says you have put more joy and rejoicing in my heart than others know when their wheat and new wine have yielded abundantly.

It was all a very supernatural and extraordinary adventure at the beach. I thank the Lord for healing my heart with His oil of joy and expanding my heart to experience more of His joy with adventures.

The Joy Of Adventure (part III)

by Mary Jensen

I have been so abundantly blessed by my Heavenly Father on my joy adventure. He opened doors for me, performed miracles, and provided above and beyond what I ever could have imagined. It's truly a story of joy, restoration, and redemption.

My joy adventure began back in April when I decided to cross over the state line and move from Kansas to Missouri. I lived in an apartment and my lease was almost up. I had no idea where I was going but I took a leap of faith and put in my 60-day notice. I had been very comfortable in that apartment as it had been a place of refuge and healing and I had so many sweet moments with the Father as He healed my heart and prepared me for my next adventure.

I'm not going to lie; it wasn't all a joy ride. At one point I got cold feet about moving away from all that was comfortable and familiar, I had been in the same area for many years and I knew where everything was. Since I'm directionally challenged, moving to an unfamiliar area

was a real stretch! Thankfully, a friend encouraged me that sometimes change is not only necessary but can be so very good. She helped me find the perfect place that checked off all of the items on my list and then we hit a small obstacle. The model that I wanted was not available and wouldn't be in the foreseeable future and I was up against a time crunch. This is where God showed up big time and opened that door. The model suddenly became available exactly when I needed to move. This just confirmed to me that I was doing the right thing crossing the state line. I also had some residual credit issues from my past that had caused me so much shame and embarrassment for quite some time. This is where another miracle came into play. The day I applied for my new home, my credit score went up 40 points, for no apparent reason, and has since gone up again, restoring it to what it was prior to my divorce.

The dear friend who helped me find my perfect home is also very talented in interior design and created a beautiful, elegant designer home. Just for me. Every morning when I wake up, I am just so overwhelmed and grateful that I get to live here! We call it my Holy Spirit designer home because He was guiding her along the

way. My old home was safe and a place of refuge. But my new home is the place where God wants me to live in His abundance. Even the look and décor is lighter and brighter. It's my happy place! As I crossed over the state line, I felt like He washed away all the hurt and shame and all the messy residue from my past and had given me a clean slate, a new beginning. I know this is only the beginning of what He has planned for me.

I believe that we are entering a season of God pouring out His abundance on His children. Even though things in this world are a little crazy, we as Lovers of Jesus get to rise above the circumstances and live without fear and lacking nothing. My prayer for you is that you know just how much you are loved by our Heavenly Father and that you are open to receive all that He has for you. He is a God of abundance and it brings Him so much joy to bless His children. So, I invite you to take a joy adventure with the Lord and let Him show you just how precious you are to Him!

Chapter 4

The Joy Of Intimacy With the Father

by Ingrid Maddock

The way I truly experience unbridled joy in my intimacy with the Father is by approaching Him as a three-year-old child. I find myself desiring to crawl up into His safe and secure lap and talking to Him about everything that is in my heart. These moments are priceless and never seem to last long enough. I could linger in the lap of My Father for days on end.

I experience pure joy in these moments. The joy comes from knowing that I can just "be." I don't have to do anything except be my perfectly imperfect and broken self melted into His warm embrace. He loves me no matter what I have done before crawling into His lap. He never shuns me or makes me feel like He is in a hurry or too busy to spend time with me. I never question His love for me.

I never doubt that I am accepted and loved lavishly. He is the greatest love of my life. Nothing compares to the love He has for me and I for Him. There is joy in that love, so

much joy, pure joy, that is found in these precious moments of living life as a three year old. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. I am so privileged to be His little girl who dances and twirls for Him and sees how much joy it brings His heart. That is the joy of intimacy with the Father to me.

Chapter 5

The Joy Of Belonging

by Terri Sullivant

A few years ago, I had an especially joyful experience. I was in Ohio with four generations of my family gathered together. It indeed is a rare occurrence for us all with our busy lives. Being with "your people," those you belong to, is super important to create an identification with "Whose" you are. Understanding "Whose you are" is the beginning of understanding "who you are."

If you have a family of origin that isn't who you really are, you need to form another group identity with a group of people who are like you – that's where the family of believers in Christ comes in. You can be who God intended you to be regardless of the family you came from.

But it really helps to start out with a family with strong character and love in the family culture. There has been so much joy in it for me as I see the love that's being communicated down through the generations. It gives me a great confidence that our families will continue to

thrive. All the grandchildren were enjoying being part of something bigger than themselves, enabling them to expand and grow. As the family bonds are strengthened, our joy quotient goes up several notches!

Ephesians 3:14-19 is for you and yours, that you might know who you are by knowing Whose you are. You are deeply loved. And there's never an end to knowing more of that love!

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:14-19 ESV.

Chapter 6

Seasons Of Rejoicing

by Zangi Miti

Three months before the pandemic forced the world in a lockdown, I traveled with my only child, my 14-year-old daughter, to Zambia, my home country. For two years before this moment, the Lord had been preparing us for this season. We were to be separated for a time while she attended the same Christian boarding school I had graduated from precisely 20 years earlier. In January 2020, I returned to Kansas City, to an empty home, with no idea that I was entering my own season of separation and preparation.

It's interesting how time seems to slither at a snail's pace when you're facing a challenge or waiting for a breakthrough. It's like sowing seeds and watching the brown soil every day, sometimes several times a day, looking for a sign of green life breaking through towards daylight. As we watch and wait, we forget that there is death beneath the soil and new life coming forth. The pattern is no different in our lives. Yet, we can find comfort, peace, and joy in God's promise that "weeping

may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

Growth and change can be uncomfortable and sometimes painful. Often, it means the loss or the shedding of the old and comfortable, making room for the new and unfamiliar. For my daughter, this meant stepping out from under my shadow and taking ownership of her own faith and ability to hear from the Lord. I had to surrender and trust that the Lord always has a plan and purpose beyond my understanding. I also learned that he never abandons us. He sits with us in our pain and discomfort while inviting us to lift our eyes and change our perspective. It's an invitation to know Him and be known by Him, as He draws us into deeper intimacy with Him. When things in our lives die, the One who died and rose again is there to walk us into a resurrected life, renewed thinking, and more profound knowledge of the cost and inheritance that comes with the blood-bought crowns we now carry.

Joy is our inheritance—a fruit of the Spirit accompanying peace and gratitude. It's a state of mind and an orientation of the heart, a settled state of contentment,

confidence, and hope that provides a source of happiness (Theopedia). It's the joy of the Lord that gives us strength (Nehemiah 8:10) through grief, trouble, and faith-numbing disappointment. In the presence of the Lord, we find the "fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11) and truths that remind us of the "joy of [His] salvation" (Psalm 51:12). In the day of trouble, in the darkness of despair, He hides us in His shelter and conceals us under the cover of His tent until the assigned time when He sets us high upon a rock (Psalm 27:5). He hides us in the secret place of His presence, where joy abounds, away from the plots of man (Psalm 21:30). Note, the "plots of man" are not always overtly evil. The plots of man could also be someone else's agenda, vision, or plans for your life or ministry, which do not align with the Lord's plans for you. He hides us from these traps that often come disguised as half-answered prayers, invitations, and opportunities.

Chapter 7

Elusive Joy

by Ingrid Maddock

Joy is indeed elusive, often seeming to slip through our fingers just when we think we've grasped it. It can be particularly challenging to uncover this profound sense of happiness when we find ourselves navigating through a tumultuous sea of troubles that tosses us about like a small boat in a storm. In such moments, joy can feel like a distant shore, obscured by the waves of our struggles and anxieties. It often appears to be fleeting, akin to a delicate butterfly flitting from flower to flower, searching for a perfect place to land. Just as the butterfly is drawn to vibrant blooms, joy can sometimes be attracted to the simplest moments in life, yet it can vanish as quickly as it arrives.

When we are fortunate enough to discover that elusive place of joy, we begin to learn a vital lesson: the importance of being content with whatever life brings our way. This contentment allows us to cultivate a mindset that seeks beauty in the mundane and the extraordinary alike. It teaches us to appreciate the gentle rustle of leaves in the wind, the warmth of sunlight on our skin, or the

laughter shared with friends and family. These seemingly small experiences can reveal profound beauty and joy, reminding us that happiness often lies not in grand achievements or possessions, but in the simple, awe-inspiring things that surround us every day.

To truly sustain a joy-filled life, we must embark on a journey to find true joy, which is fundamentally rooted in inner joy. Inner joy is a deep-seated sense of well-being that empowers us to rise above the chaos and challenges that life inevitably throws our way. This kind of joy is not dependent on external circumstances or fleeting moments of pleasure; rather, it is a steady, unwavering force that resides within us. It enables us to maintain a positive outlook, even in the face of adversity, and to find strength and resilience when times are tough.

This inner joy, which serves as a foundation for a fulfilling life, comes from one singular source: Our Heavenly Father. It is essential to recognize that this joy cannot be bought, created, or manufactured through human effort or material possessions. Instead, it is a divine gift, bestowed upon us through a deep and personal relationship with the Creator. This connection allows us to tap into a wellspring of joy that transcends our

circumstances, offering comfort and hope in times of distress.

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 (ESV)

Chapter 8

Joy Prayers and Affirmations

by Anoushka Riley

Thank you Lord Jesus for blessing me abundantly with the wonderful Joy experiences: Your Joy in my heart, the fruit of the Holy Spirit of Joy blossoming in me; the Oil of Joy lavishly poured over me, and the Joy of Salvation flowing out of intimacy with you, my Lord.

Today, I say yes to going deeper in my Intimacy with you my Lord, and to open my entire being for this new experience of a world full of adventures with You, that will ignite a Joy explosion!!

Holy Spirit guide me in this exciting joyful experience of everyday adventures from mini adventures to new easygoing adventures to out of the box adventures such as paddle boarding, hammock camping, park biking, mini road trip, hiking a new trail, visiting a new museum or street art, try eating or cooking a new cuisine, exploring a state park, mountain climbing, skydiving, scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, river rafting, and so much more. I am embracing the Holy Spirit's leading to unexpected

and unusual places, events, and people, and let Him awaken joy in me in all of these adventures that will create wholeness and freedom for my heart.

I affirm these following scripture verses over my heart as I dive into my joy adventures with Him.

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. John 15:11 - (ESV).

I have told you these, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing. John 15:11-13 (AMPC).

My purpose for telling you these things is so that the joy that I experience will fill your hearts with overflowing gladness. John 15:11-13 (TPT)

Though you have not seen Christ, you love Him; and even though you do not see him now you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. 1 Peter 1:8 (NIV).

Without having seen Him, you love Him; though you do not even now see Him, you believe in Him and exult and thrill with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy. 1 Peter 1:8 (AMPC)

You love Him passionately although you did not see Him, but through believing in Him you are saturated with an ecstatic joy, indescribably sublime and immersed in glory. 1 Peter 1:8 (TPT).

I am praying over each one of your beautiful hearts that just like in Psalm 30: 5 says that at daybreak our mourning will turn into shouts of ecstatic joy, I pray that Our Abba Father will restore joy back into your hearts so you can experience and encounter the Joy of adventures with child - like wonder and abandon.

I love this quote from Claire Cloninger: "Children are really good at open-hearted, spontaneous joy. That is why they use it lavishly in the present moment. They spend it with abandon. They practice it at every small occasion."

And I pray, the Holy Spirit lead us into new places of adventure with an open heart and let spontaneous joy bubble over in us.

Dear Father,

Thank you for healing and restoring our hearts and filling us anew with Joy unspeakable in our adventure of life!

In the name of Jesus, our Joy Giver. Amen.

Chapter 9

Joy That Jesus Brought To Earth

by Ingrid Maddock

Jesus brought joy to the world while He was still in the womb. Do you remember the story when Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus were together with babies in their womb? Baby John leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb because Jesus was occupying the atmosphere. Now that is a potent Joy Bearer!

The joy of Jesus was modeled throughout His life. He did not waiver. He didn't experience joy one day and then was depressed the next. His joy was constantly overflowing. Even in times of sorrow, Jesus knew the Father would sustain Him with "the oil of joy." And we have that same gift. The oil of joy is constantly flowing from the Father into our lives. The issue is that sometimes our cup is not receptive to the oil He is pouring upon us.

Joy is not merely the by-product of laughter and fun. *"Joy is the emotion that makes life worth living in the moment*

because it resonates with our core identity. It is associated with feelings of ease, appreciation, and meaning."

What is your capacity for joy? All of the gifts Jesus brought to the manger are ours for the choosing. You have a choice to live in peace. You have a choice to love. And you have a choice to experience joy. Joy is a choice.

If you are having difficulty experiencing joy your struggle may be the result of a breach in your identity. Do you truly know who you are and are you truly living out of that knowledge?

Lovely, this has nothing to do with natural characteristics -- what you look like, how much you weigh, or if the reflection in the mirror is showing signs of age. It doesn't have anything to do with your relationship, financial, career, or family status, or -- you fill in the blank. Joy has everything to do with living from a place of knowing who you are and being fully content in that knowledge. That doesn't mean you don't want to change this or that, it means that even if nothing changes you are content and happy with who you are, who you truly are!

You have the ability to live out of joy no matter what is going on around you.

You have to ask yourself -- Do I really experience joy?

Pause for a moment and meditate on the following questions. Be honest. No one is listening except God and, let's face it, He already knows.

Are you living an authentic life?

Are you living from a place of true gratitude?

Are you in tune with and enjoy spending time with your inner child?

Have you kicked fear to the curb or are you still taking laps around the pool of anxiety?

Have you surrounded yourself with positive people and are you vigilant not to allow negative people to influence your atmosphere?

Do you have authentic bonded relationships?

Have you truly confronted your past and are not holding your life hostage to things you cannot change?

Do you laugh often?

Are you waiting for things to change to be joyful?

Do you have passion?

Do you sweat the small stuff or have you come to realize you can afford it?

Do you get away from your screens often and experience the three-dimensional world?

Father, I am having a difficult time keeping my joy cup filled. I want to experience joy, true, passionate joy, but I just cannot seem to find the resolve deep inside of my soul to muster up the courage to grab all the joy you have for my life. I know your oil pours over me in times of sorrow, distress, and discomfort but my receptors are off kilter and unable to capture Your joy. I need a realignment. Maybe truly in my heart of hearts I really need to allow myself to go back to basics and experience child-like joy in my life.

Will you help me rewire my thinking?

I ask Father for your joy to be poured out in me and I ask that I would be able to receive it. I cannot do it on my own. I have proven that in the past. I must have your intervention. I am inviting you to intervene. Remove every saboteur or surrogate of joy from my life. I don't believe anything good comes from faking it until you make it. That is truly a lie from the enemy that has trapped me into thinking that anything fake can get me on the path to the authentic. I am tired of a life lived without an abundance of joy. I want joy, Father!

In the Name of , Jesus. Amen.

Chapter 10

Joy Scripture Meditations

My fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties see it as an invaluable opportunity to experience the greatest joy that you can! For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things. James 1:2-3

Go ahead and celebrate! Come on and clap your hands, everyone! Shout to God with the raucous sounds of joy! Psalm 47:1

Lord, you have multiplied the nation and given them overwhelming joy! They are ecstatic in your presence and rejoice like those who bring in a great harvest and those who divide up the spoils of victory! Isaiah 9:3

Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Ecclesiastes 9:7

You love him passionately although you did not see him, but through believing in him you are saturated with an ecstatic joy, indescribably sublime and immersed in glory. For you are reaping the harvest of your faith—the full salvation promised you—your souls' victory! 1 Peter 1:8-9

Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his superabundance until you radiate with hope! Romans 15:13