

Consider
the
Lilies

"This book is exceptional
in every way."
—JOHN MACARTHUR



Finding
Perfect Peace
in the
Character
of God

Jonny
Ardavanis

Consider the Lilies

Chapter 14: *Rejoicing on Repeat*

“At the appointment, the cardiologist informed us that Scottie’s hemangioma was merely a symptom of a much more significant underlying disease – a disease that is often linked with a short life expectancy and infant strokes and seizures.” (pg. 213)

“In God’s providence, sometimes when it rains it pours... As I write this chapter, we have another appointment scheduled with the neurologist in a few weeks. We are praying that God will protect and preserve our precious baby girl. Between discussions with doctors and battles with the insurance company, I found myself asking, ‘Do I truly trust God?’” (pgs. 213-214)

Not, “Is God Trustworthy?” but, “Do I truly trust God?”

Questions the character of God

Questions the extent of my faith

“One of the realities that has struck me as my wife and I walk this road with our daughter is that I am commanded not only to trust God but to ‘consider it all joy’ when I encounter any sort of trial in my life (James 1:2). My family and finances are up in the air, I am tempted to be anxious about the unknown, yet Scripture instructs me to ‘rejoice always’ and ‘give thanks in all circumstances’ (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Really? In all circumstances? In ER visits? In financial uncertainty? In trial? In sorrow? In pain? Not every circumstance is conducive to joy, but the imperative in Scripture isn’t to rejoice sometimes, but to ‘rejoice always.’ I realized, rejoicing is not an option to consider but rather a command I must obey. This recognition is convicting at first, but then it is liberating! Why? Because I know that there is no command in Scripture that is impossible to obey. God’s commandments are His enablings. Therefore, joy in pain and affliction is not only possible, but it is a promised fruit for all who walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).” (pgs. 214-215)

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control.

1. It is only experienced by those who have the Holy Spirit.
2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

1. It is only experienced by those who have the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

John 13:35

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

“The believer can, amid great turmoil and deep despair, possess inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8). The apostle Paul put it this way by saying we are ‘sorrowful yet always rejoicing’ (2 Corinthians 6:10). (pg. 215)

*“Joy is much different from the conventional understanding of happiness. The English word ‘happiness’ is rooted in the ^{Old Norse} ~~Latin~~ ‘hap’, which is ‘chance.’ Happiness is grounded in ‘**happenings**’ and ‘**happenstance**.’ Happiness is a fleeting feeling that is fostered as a spontaneous response to pleasures, successes, situations, and possessions.” (pg. 215)*

“hap” = “luck”, “chance”, or “fortune”

“ness” = “a state of being”

“happiness” = “good fortune” or “good luck”

1590's

“An emotional state resulting from favorable circumstance.”

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

Joy, however, is distinguished from happiness as it is not dependent on our circumstances but is the conviction that shapes our every attitude toward our circumstances. The Christian's joy is not the natural response to life's events but the supernatural fruit of believing the gospel of Jesus Christ and the character of our heavenly Father. Christian joy is not something we can manufacture; it is produced in us by the Spirit of God even amid great suffering and pain. Unlike happiness, joy is grounded in our faith and the changeless character of our heavenly Father. When we look at our circumstances, our happiness will inevitably wane, but when we fix our gaze on God, He gives us both peace and indescribable joy. (pgs. 215-216)

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

Exodus 14:15

“Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.”

Exodus 14:19-20

¹⁹ The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. ²⁰ So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel.

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

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*“The apostle Peter’s first epistle was written to a church community that endured much persecution and affliction. The notorious emperor Nero would often crucify followers of Jesus; at other times, he would feed them to the lions in the Colosseum; sometimes he would light them on fire and use them as human torches in his gardens... Nevertheless, in spite of the persecution and pain, Peter began his epistle by saying, ‘In this **you greatly rejoice**, even though now for a little while, if necessary, **you have been distressed by various trials**’ (1 Peter 1:6). Peter continued by saying, ‘**To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing**’ (1 Peter 4:13). Peter didn’t merely tell them to ‘trust God’ – he went one step further – he told them to rejoice and to keep on rejoicing.” (pg. 216)*

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

The apostle Paul expressed a similar exhortation when he wrote to the Philippian church. Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned, and seventeen times throughout his short epistle he mentioned joy... Paul's joy was unshakable. Why? Not because he found joy in himself, but because his joy was 'in the Lord' (Philippians 3:1)... His mind was anchored in the character of God... True joy is never found by looking at our circumstances; it is found by looking to our Father." (pgs. 216-217)

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

Matthew 5:11-12

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.”

Luke 6:23

“Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.”

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

2. It is a product of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of our circumstances.

James 1:2-4

*² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*





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Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him... to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Hebrews 5:8-9

⁸ Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

“The believer knows that trials are refining fire in which we are conformed to the image of Christ.” (pg. 218)

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

1. Your Father's Character

“Joy is the proper response to the character of our heavenly Father. Because I know that God is sovereign, wise, loving, and all powerful, and He is determined to bless me as His child, I possess a deep-seated confidence, not only in His control, but in His plan. Knowing that my Father is working everything out for my good and His glory cultivates a joy that the world does not understand... I cannot always rejoice in my circumstances, but God's Spirit enables me to rejoice in the God who controls my circumstances. The believer's joy is impenetrable and unflagging because it is anchored not in fleeting circumstances but in our Father's changeless and constant character.” (pg. 219)

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

1. Your Father's Character

Psalm 9:2

I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Psalm 32:11

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

Psalm 33

Verse 1: Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones.

Verse 3: Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Verse 21: For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name.

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

2. The Word of God

John 15:11

“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

“The joy of the Lord abides only in those who abide in His Word. Psalm 19:8 says, ‘The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.’ True joy can be gleaned only by those who mine the gold of God’s Word.” (pg. 220)

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

2. The Word of God **Where does Jesus' joy come from?**

Luke 15:5-6

⁵ "When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'"

Luke 15:9

"When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!'"

Luke 15:32

"We had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found."

Luke 15:10

*"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God **over one sinner who repents.**"*

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

3. The Gospel

“Can you say this with an honest heart? ‘If I never receive another blessing outside of what I have already received in Christ, I would still have overwhelming reason to rejoice’... To those who know Him as Savior, there is a deep-seated joy that comes from knowing that our greatest need in life has already been met – our sins are forgiven! And because I am ‘in Christ,’ Christ’s joy is always with me. Joy is not something I muster up – it’s a fruit of the Spirit that lives in me. If you are anxious, worried, or despairing, it is an exercise in futility to attempt to produce joy in and of yourself; you must abide in Christ to abide in His joy (John 15:4-9). True peace and true joy are not the absence of uncertainty, pain, and difficulty but the presence of Jesus in your life. The only people who can say ‘The joy of the Lord is [my] strength’ (Nehemiah 8:10) are those who can say, ‘Jesus is my Savior!’” (pgs. 220-221)

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

4. Your Future Inheritance

Philippians 1:21-23

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. ²³ But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.

Romans 8:16-18

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

REASONS FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS:

4. Your Future Inheritance

“Know this: whenever you lose sight of heaven in your thinking, you can be sure you will lose joy in your heart. This world was never meant to satisfy and was never intended to fulfill. We are, as C. S. Lewis used to say, ‘made for another world,’ and fixing our hope on the world to come is what sustains our joy and anchors our hope.” (pg. 222)

“Joy is one of the spiritual birthmarks of a Christian, but it must be understood: joy isn’t the absence of sadness – it’s the presence of God’s Holy Spirit in our lives. Joy is more about our perspective than it is our circumstances.” (pg. 222)

“We live in an anxious world, and every individual is asking, ‘Where can peace be found?’ There is only one answer: supernatural peace is only received by those who come to God’s supernatural Word and meditate deeply upon His loving and changeless character.” (pg. 223)





Next Time: *Satan's Lies*

Chris Ronk teaching

“The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.”

– Isaiah 26:3