

STRENGTHENED BY OPEN DOORS OPEN DOORS OF JOYFULNESS IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

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One of the downsides of the mostly awesome phenomenon of human consciousness is the ability to worry about the future. We know the future exists, but we don't know what's going to happen in it. "In other animals, unpredictability or uncertainty can lead to heightened vigilance, but I think what's unique about humans is the ability to reflect on the fact that these future events are unknown or unpredictable." Dan Grupe - Investigating Healthy Minds.

"Uncertainty": the "Unseen"

Greek "adēlos" which means "not clear"

- a situation in which something is not known or certain; the feeling of not being sure what will happen in the future.

How Times of Uncertainty Impact Us

Test the Strength of Our Faith

As a rule, humans prefer certainty to uncertainty. Not knowing what to do, not knowing what's going to happen, not knowing what other people are thinking and feeling. These situations are ripe to breed anxiety in anyone, depending on how well they're able to tolerate uncertainty.

What does that mean for us as Christians?

Jesus asks a key question in Matthew 6:27 - "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

In other words, what benefit is there to you worrying? You're not going to live any longer by worrying about things that are out of your control.

So, don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:31-33, NLT)

Cause Us to Lose Sight of Our Eternal Purpose

Uncertainty should allow us to move our thoughts from the natural to the supernatural. The danger in losing sight of our eternal purpose is that our decisions become motivated by fear and then fulfil our earthly pleasures.

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. (Colossians 3:1-2, NLT)

- True limitations are set by our level of faith.
- Fear convinces us that God will not catch you when you fall.
- Fear maybe your default response, anxiety maybe the go to gut feeling. But we have to break past it. Realising what is possible with God can change everything.

In what areas of your life have you been most tempted to believe that God has abandoned you?

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Times of Uncertainties Are A Threat to Our Joy

Even though life may be full of uncertainties, God's plan for us is to have joy in every season. *"Joy is a gift from the Holy Spirit. Unlike happiness. Joy is gladness that is completely independent of circumstance, a supernatural contentment no matter the storms of life that come your way. Joy is a strength hidden in God, accessible only through a focus on Him and a real walk with the Holy Spirit."* Fruits of the Spirit prayer guide.

Seasons of uncertainties are a threat to our joy and the inability to deal with the unknown can lead to worry and distress. But we have the option to always choose joy.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. (James 1:2, NLT)

For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. (Psalm 30:5, NLT)

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again rejoice! ... Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. (Philippians 4:4, 6, NLT)

Always be joyful. (1 Thessalonians 5:16, NLT)

You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! (Isaiah 55:12, NLT)

Joyfulness is a reflection of God in us. The devil has nothing to offer a rejoicing believer. When we choose joy "Devil, you have got no hold of me". When we are purposeful about having joy, we begin to silence the lies of the enemy.

Opening Doors of Joyfulness in Times of Uncertainty

The example of Abraham

Don't hate the place that God has placed you to learn in. Regard it as a place of opportunity.

Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" ... Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. (Romans 4:18, 20-22, NLT)

Few of the reminders that we have from the prayer guide on joy is that:

- Joy is possible in every season. Psalms 30:11-12
- Joy is found in God's presence. 1 Chronicles 16:27
- Joy through prayer, worship and giving thanks. Daniel 10:10-12
- Joy in meeting together. Hebrews 10:25
- Joy and Peace are only found in God

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing through the experience of your faith that by the power of the Holy Spirit you will abound in hope and overflow with confidence in His promises. (Romans 15:13, AMP)

If every moment of our lives was to be made known to us, what would our level of faith be like? It is in the things we cannot see that our faith is evident (Hebrews 11:1).

Therefore, let us be encouraged to wait in joyful hope and expectation that even when we cannot see it, God is working on our behalf. Even when we don't feel it, He is still working. God is not man that he should lie (Numbers 23:19). He never sleeps nor slumbers (Psalm 121:4) and His word never returns void (Isaiah 55:10-12).