

# FRESH JOY: Finding Joy in the Midst of Loss, Hardship and Suffering



## SESSION 2-CHAPTERS 3 AND 4

### CHAPTER 3 – Fully Alive

Regret cuts deep and if not dealt with, will keep you prisoner in our past and rob you of freedom and sustaining joy.

The Bible says this: “He is a mighty Savior. He will give you victory. He will rejoice over you in great gladness; he will love you and not accuse you” (Zeph. 3:17 TLB).

I understand that God is our Savior that gives us victory and rejoices over us with gladness. But why would it say that he will “not accuse” you?

Resurrection life is not just about Easter Sunday. And it’s not about what happens after we die, it’s about what happens while we live. What does “resurrection life” look like to you?

#### STORY OF LAZARUS (John 11:3-44)

“if only...” those haunting and gnawing words. It’s when we can’t do a U-turn or do-over. My “if only” was not calling an ambulance.

“What is your “if only?”

I love the way Jesus asks simple questions to help us unleash our most complicated and painful regrets.

.v 34 – “Where did you put him?” Jesus wants to know what is dead in your life. A lost dream, your self worth, the relationship with your husband, unfulfilled purpose? Where/how have you hidden your pain?

As long as we’re stuck in the darkness, our spiritual eyes can’t see the possibilities of new hope or new beginnings. Jesus wants nothing standing between you and him. We need to invite him into our pain, to “come and see what is painful and hopeless in my life.” How can you start this process? Healing prayer? Counseling? Sharing with a trusted friend?

Jesus wants us to live fully alive, not wearing any grave clothes. What Bible verse gives you comfort to help you trust him with your future of new joy?

### GROW YOUR JOY

What if God is the God of second chances and wants to turn your “if only” regrets into “what if” possibilities? What if you roll the stone away and your greatest joy is behind barrier?

What “best life” are you still waiting for? Give your regrets to Jesus and wait for the unleashing of joy.

And...don’t forget to be thankful.

## CHAPTER 4 – Joy Givers and Joy Busters

God created us for relationships. Deep, intimate and loving friendships that exude joy and are life-giving and contagious. They give us the greatest joy, but also the deepest pain.

Do you have a trusted friend you can call at 2:00 in the morning? Who is it?

At one time or another we will all need a trusted and loyal friend in our life. Becoming a joyful woman means taking the time to build life-sustaining relationships in various areas of our life. To cultivate friendship and joy, we have to be able to identify our “joy busters.”

Which one is yours?

1. **Relationships are substantial only when I’m helping to repair someone’s life.** It’s wonderful when we have a servant heart and the gift of helps. But we have to be able to identify the difference between an intimate friendship and “ministering” to someone. Do you struggle with separating these two?

2. **Needing people is a sign of weakness.** At one time or another we will all need someone in our life. Do you have difficulty asking for help? If so, why?

3. **Loving and intimate relationships bring pain and disappointment.** We will always have “sandpaper” people in our lives, but that is how we become more beautiful and resilient. Who is that sandpaper person (or people) in your life?

4. **I don’t have time to develop enjoyable and fun relationships?** We always make time for what is important. What efforts do you make to keep your relationships vibrant, fun and meaningful?

5. **I’m self-sufficient; I don’t need anyone telling me what to do.** Being self-reliant is a wonderful trait but often but it pushes people away and robs us of true love and joy. In what areas do you need to reach out more? If you have the tendency to push people away, do you know why you do it?

6. **Vulnerability in relationships requires me to share areas of my heart I’m not willing to open.** Vulnerability is the key to intimate, healthy and loving relationships. Define what being vulnerable means to you. If you are afraid of being vulnerable, explain why.

### GROW YOUR JOY

To grow joy we have to make relationships our highest priority. Ask yourself this question: “When I fast forward to the end of my life, what is one sentence I would like people to say about me?”

Isolation is a trap that the enemy uses so that you are not covered by the protective and loving shield of other Christian friends. Even in the middle of Covid restrictions how can we nurture our relationships? Share ideas about how we can do that.