

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



SESSION 3-CHAPTERS 5 AND 6

CHAPTER 5 – The Joy Set Before Us

‘The Lord’s promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.’ (Psalm 12:6 NLT)
What promises of God are you hanging onto during this difficult season of Covid?

Pain is an equalizer and it does not favour any race, nationality or position. Pain causes our faith to be forced out in the open and shows our “true colours.”

What has surprised you about how Covid has affected your emotions, thoughts and feelings?

Nobody welcomes pain, even when we know the “joy set before us.” While Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were in the fiery furnace, the only thing that burned off was? _____

Heidi listed several items how God set her free in the fire. During your hardships, what are some things God has freed you from?

We don’t like the darkness, the cold and dark place of aloneness and dreariness where we feel so vulnerable. As crazy as it sounds, this darkness produces many “treasures.” What treasures do you want God to reveal and grow in you?

Does the phrase “joy set before me” give you hope, or is it just a nice saying? What joy are you presently yearning for?

My daughter Michelle tells her story about the painful years of adoptions and how 14 years later she gave birth to their daughter Mya. How has praying and waiting for God to answer your prayer grown your faith? Or has it discouraged you and you’ve stopped praying?

GROW YOUR JOY

Revealing and acknowledging your suffering is the first step to letting God give you hidden treasures. What do you need to reveal to God?

Don’t give up on the silver. God knows what you’re going through and He will one day give you more than you can even imagine. Keep asking.

CHAPTER 6 – Joy In The Desert

The desert is a barren, hard and lonely place and I refer to it as “the land between”; the place of transition. You are no longer in that place where everything was familiar, normal and maybe not perfect; but comfortable. No matter what your “land between” looks like, you need assurance that you’re going to get through it. This becomes a crucial place for trusting God.

Do you consider Covid-19 to be a “land between” for you? If so, describe how this is affecting your life.

Looking at the story of the Israelites, why do you think God puts us in the “land between?”

We always have a choice, whether we learn to trust God with every aspect of our life or rebelliously do it our way. Our Christian faith becomes steadfast and real when we know without a doubt that God is at work even when we can’t see anything happening. Are you trusting God or trying to do it your way?

1. **God is always beside us.** After reading the two stories of Mary’s encounter with Jesus and Jacob story of the ladder to Heaven, how does this impact your faith? Have you had a God encounter? Explain.
2. **Everything in Life is Temporary.** As humans, while we are in a desert our view is short-sighted, and often we can’t see an end. Psalm 23:4 was the verse that impacted me and reminded me we are all going **through** different seasons in our life. What examples in nature, or God’s promises remind you that everything in life is temporary?
3. **Power Starts on Our Knees.** What was God’s purpose for taking the Israelites through the desert? When life is tough it doesn’t take long before we’re whining and complaining. What is your first response when life doesn’t go the way you planned?

God tells us in Numbers 11:23 “Is the LORD’s arm too short?” Instead of grumbling, what does this verse tell us about the Lord and what our response should be?

4. **God Wants Us to Ask for Help.** Grumbling, pride and self-sufficiency create a barrier between God and us and may sabotage us getting out of the “land between.” Do you have a hard time asking for help? If so, how come?

5. **We Declare Joy in a Stance of Victory.** To get out of the desert and into the Promised Land we have to take the same attitude as Caleb. What was that stance? What is the biggest obstacle to getting out of the “land between?” One word _____ . A victor’s mentality becomes a victor’s _____ .

GROW YOUR JOY

No matter where we are at, we can always upgrade our joy. In the middle of Covid this one is so easy for us, we have the time and many of us have several Bibles around the house. What will you do to upgrade your joy?

Develop a “Goditude.” Don’t you love that word? Intentionally listen to every word that comes out of your mouth and determine it to be uplifting and joyful. Try it for a few days and you’ll be surprised how your joy will follow.