

Let Joy Be Your Weapon

by Rita Langeland
Hidden With Christ Ministries
P. O. Box 3267
Tustin, California 92781 USA

You will laugh at destruction and famine... Job 5:22

If you have ever read the book of Job, you will remember observing the man who had the single worst day of his life recorded for all to see in the Bible. In one horrific day, this man named Job lost all of his children in a tragic accident, thieves stole all of his wealth and he was suddenly struck with a painful and debilitating disease. Imagine the overwhelming despair a person would be faced with if their wealth, health and children were taken from them in less than a 24 hour period.

Yet God did not intend for Job's life to stay that way, in fact God already had a plan for his total restoration. But before Job would experience it, God gave Job several spiritual keys that would be critical for Job to grasp. One of them was the key of JOY.

Many people would immediately question the sanity of a person suggesting they be joyful when they have just faced tragedy and loss. Yet that is exactly what God wanted Job to do. In order to comprehend this spiritual principle, you must understand the difference between joy and happiness.

Random House Dictionary defines happiness as a state of mind resulting from the possession or attainment of what one considers good. In other words, the condition of "happiness" is dependent upon outward circumstances that the person is experiencing at the time. Job certainly could not have been "happy" on the day he experienced such incredible loss because his circumstances certainly were not good.

However, joy is a totally different animal. Though the English language often uses the words happiness and joy interchangeably, there is a distinct difference between the two, especially as used in a Biblical context. Happiness depends upon what is happening outside, while joy is dependent upon what is happening "inside".

Galatians 5:22 defines joy as a "fruit of the Spirit" as opposed to being the fruit of a person's current circumstances in life. The word "Spirit" in that verse refers to God's Spirit – the One who creates the fruit of joy in the

heart of a person whose life has been surrendered to God. So it is possible for an individual to have "joy" in his heart even if he has negative circumstances in his life. And as we will see later, having JOY is a choice each individual must make!

Joy is not only a spiritual "fruit" – it is a spiritual force. Nehemiah 8:10 demonstrates the power of joy when it says, **"...the joy of the Lord is your strength!"** God wants you to use this spiritual force as a weapon to deal with difficulties you may be facing in life.

We can see this spiritual weapon at work in 2 Chronicles 20:14-25. King Jehoshaphat was faced with an invading enemy army that vastly outnumbered his troops. The situation looked like certain disaster was imminent. But God gave him some strange counsel – the king was to place the singers out in front of the army and they were to sing PRAISE to God and rejoice! Praise to God is a way of giving expression to inward joy. This spiritual strategy of using JOY AS A WEAPON was the key that turned the situation around. Suddenly, the enemy army turned on each other and they destroyed themselves! The victory that King Jehoshaphat experienced that day was tremendous and it had all resulted from God's counsel to express joy in the face of overwhelming difficulty.

We see the same results in the New Testament. Paul the Apostle knew a lot about adversity. He had been beaten, persecuted, betrayed, gone without food, shipwrecked and thrown into prison. His daily circumstances were not the kind that would make a person "happy." Yet it was this same man that counseled New Testament believers in Philippians 4:4 to: **"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice!"** Paul practiced what he preached and used joy as a weapon and got results. In Acts chapter 16, we find Paul in prison with his feet shackled, singing praises to God. In a matter of moments, the earth shook and his chains fell off, the prison doors opened and the spiritual force of joy had done its amazing work!

Jesus told His disciples that they would face difficulties in this life. His words are recorded for us in John 16:33 – ***These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*** The word "tribulation" in that verse means "pressures, trials, distress and frustration." Do you have any pressure in your life? Are you experiencing a trial, distress or frustration? Jesus tells you exactly what to do - ***...be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!*** The Lord was not telling His disciples (or us) to pretend the situation doesn't exist. Instead He was giving us a secret to victory OVER the tribulation. The key is to REJOICE – to express JOY – not because you are having a problem, but because you serve

a God who is bigger than ANY problem. And as you do that – the enemy will be defeated – just like in the case of King Jehoshaphat and the chains that are imprisoning you will be broken just like in the case of the Apostle Paul.

In the middle of Job's desperate situation, God wanted him to **"laugh at destruction and famine..."** Your situation may be no less desperate than Job's, and there is nothing comical about it. Yet God wants you to laugh at the destruction you are facing. By doing so you are making a spiritual statement – **that it is not over yet** – that God will have the final word on your case – not the devil or any problem. In Job's case, the end of his story was that God restored DOUBLE to him of all that was stolen from him in that terrible string of disasters.

God wants to write the end of your story with equal power and restoration. But you need to choose to take hold of this weapon of JOY. You can choose to give in to despairing thoughts about your circumstances or you can choose to rejoice that you serve a God who is well able to deal with every problem you are facing. Put the weapon of JOY to work in your life and watch the wonders that will result from it.

Rita Langeland
Hidden With Christ Ministries
www.hiddenwithchrist.com

Copyright Statement: FAITH CORNER Copyright 2008-2009 © Rita Langeland. 'FAITH CORNER' articles may be reproduced in whole under the following provision: 1) A proper credit must be given to the author at the end of each story, along with a link to <http://www.hiddenwithchrist.com>