

A FINDING JOY EBOOK FROM JOY LET LOOSE

replace lies
with Truth

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To those who are struggling to find
joy again.
And those who are ready to fight lies
with Truth.

Elizabeth Joy

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INTRODUCTION

Joy is real. It's an actual wellspring that can sustain us, strengthen us, and spill over to people around us. Joy is promised to us in Scripture, so why do so many of us feel we have lost it? What is it that comes along to steal our joy?

The primary thief is a real enemy whose goal is to rob us of our joy. His lifeblood is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). His nature is to lie (John 8:44). What greater power could he have over us than to deceive us, stripping us of confidence, and silencing our wellspring of joy?

Thankfully, we can identify lying thoughts, take them captive, and make them obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). For the good of our souls, it is absolutely essential that we name the lies, and replace them with Truth.

At **Joy Let Loose**, we passionately pursue the kind of life that explodes with joy. So we want to help identify Lies that Steal Our Joy (& the Truth that Sets Us Free.)

It takes practice, and often a whole lot of accountability, to recognize, name, and replace lies. **But I promise you that freedom and joy lie on the other side!**

LIE #1 - I'M NOT ENOUGH

Oh, how easy it is to look at ourselves in light of everyone else! It's incredibly simple for the enemy to gain access to our perspective as soon as we begin to evaluate how _____ we are compared to anyone else.
Have you experienced this?

I'm not:

pretty enough

smart enough

thin enough

energetic enough

spiritual enough

young enough

_____ enough...

It takes very little time for a comparison mindset to steal the wind from our sails and suck our joy dry.

Truth #1 - I am Enough

But Scripture is clear that we only need to see ourselves in light of Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:16-18, Paul says that if we follow Jesus, then the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are God's children, and co-heirs with Christ. As a co-heir, we are joined with Him--adopted as God's sons and daughters--and compared only to Him.

God says that we are enough. Psalm 139 says we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ to rescue us from sin and transform us in to His likeness demonstrates pure, unrestrained love.

The next time the lie comes to your mind that you are not ____ enough, capture it. **Name it as a lie.** And replace it with the Truth that God sees you, chooses you, and loves you enough to call you His own son or daughter.

He sees you as welcome and wonderful enough to join with Jesus.



LIE #2: I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH

I've lived lots of places. Most of them have been in (North American) depressed economies. And ministry is not a lucrative career!

When we had to rely on WIC to afford milk for our kids, I thought, "I don't have enough." When we struggled to pay for car repairs or to fill the tank, "I don't have enough." When our oil bill exceeded our mortgage payment...same thoughts.

But God has now called us to minister in a very wealthy area. Feeling out of place? A little! Recently, we bought a house. The house-hunting process in a wealthy area proved to be a tempting place to begin to say, "I don't have enough.."

So I've found that it doesn't matter whether I live around luxury or lack, the enemy still likes to throw darts about it.

Truth #2 - My God Provides

In those seasons of scarcity, God proved again and again that He is enough. His repeated, miraculous provision through the hands of the generous showed me that, in fact, I had so much that I could overflow it to others.

When bank statements made no sense, still there was just enough for us not to sink. When we were not sure how we would make it to another pay-check, bags of groceries and plentiful harvest would be waiting on our porch.

I've learned not to pine after what I can't have, and to be content with what is possible. And high in the mountains of Haiti, I was reminded again that He is enough. And not only do I have enough, I have enough for others too. I will not be defeated by a poverty mindset. **My God provides!**
(Philippians 4:19)

So whether you are in a season of luxury or one of lack, be wary of your thoughts. Gratitude and contentment are always possible as we lean into the Lord's provision. **Challenge the lie that you don't have enough with the truth that He will provide for all of your needs in Christ Jesus.**



LIE #3: MY CIRCUMSTANCE MEANS NO JOY

Let's face it: life is plain hard. Many of us struggle against realities we never dreamed possible, and navigate circumstances that seem too much to bear.

Whether issues with family, health, finances, or stolen dreams, energy can get zapped, hope can seem lost, and a joyful perspective can feel impossible to find again.

But our joy is not dependent on circumstances alone. In fact, it is dependent on our God.

Joy is a supernatural reality, rooted in God's character, that weaves in through our very souls. Abiding joy is what causes the widow to turn toward God for solace, and makes the cancer patient intent on leaning in to each remaining moment.

Truth #3: Joy Disregards Circumstances

Our circumstances might dampen our feelings of happiness, but the wellbeing that is found in Jesus will not be shaken. **Joy remains.** We must peer through the fog to remember it and lean on its strength.

When Isaiah prophesied in Chapter 52 that deliverance was coming, he instructed the Israelites to lean in to the promise of salvation, and to take off chains and shout for joy, even as they waited. They weren't to hold out for rescue before they rejoiced about it.

Joy disregards circumstances. And our disciplined rejoicing in faith can yield the fruit of abundant joy. So the next time your life circumstances threaten your wellbeing, and the enemy whispers to you that your joy is lost, **refuse to believe it.**

Claim the truth that the joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10), and lean in to it.



LIE #4 - I'M NOT A JOYFUL PERSON

I know people whose nature is to exude happiness. Their thanksgiving is inspiring and their energy is boundless. I know others who express joy through patience and contentment. Still others depict joy in their compassion and generosity. It takes on different forms, and is not a one-size-fits-all quality.

I am introverted in personality, and even-keel in temperament, so I have often thought I may not be joyful. I've questioned where my joy is. My self-reflection about my emotional tendencies has actually caused me to become increasingly melancholy as I worried about my joy.

Am I just not a joyful person?

Perhaps your natural temperament makes you question whether your nature is to be joyful.

Truth #4: My Joy is Unique

Joy is a God-like trait, and a fruit that grows in us as we grow closer to the Lord. It becomes our very nature as we are transformed to be like Jesus.

Scripture actually shows joy in many forms: it looks like perseverance in trial (James 1:2-3), exuberance in praise (Psalm 47), confidence and gratitude for God's provision (Ecclesiastes 9:7), and deep and abiding faith (1 Peter 1:8-9).

So, when you are tempted to think you are not a joyful person, shake off your one-size-fits-all definition. **Your joy is unique.** Joy doesn't look just one way - it is not **only** exuberant, chipper, and boisterous. Instead, remind yourself that joy also abides, remains steadfast, believes fully, and bears patiently.

Ask the Lord to restore to you the joy of your salvation.

LIE #5 - MY PAST DEFINES MY IDENTITY

How eager are you to share with others all the details of your past? Are all of your memories happy and respectable? If you are like most people, shame and embarrassment lie intertwined with positive memories, regrets and rejoicing all jumbled together.

Our choices have natural consequences, and some of them carry repercussions for years and decades. Poor life decisions can have long-term ramifications as we carry hurt, unforgiveness, guilt or resentment.

For many, these past memories and decisions are a noose around the neck, and shackle around the ankle. How could an adulterer ever find a pure relationship again? How could an abuser be truly forgiven? Can a cheat ever be trusted again?

The enemy seeks to bind you to your past self.

Truth #5 - My Identity is in Christ

Galatians 2:20 gives solid hope to the one who has felt imprisoned by his or her past. Paul's encouraging words remind us that if we are in Christ, **it is no longer us who live, but Christ who lives in us.** We don't live anymore bound to our flesh, but instead we live by faith in Jesus Christ, and in His life.

You are not who you once were.

If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, then the old has gone, and the new has come.

(2 Corinthians 5: 17)

There are natural consequences to our decisions, and we do continue to live with them: marriages are broken, children are estranged, businesses are lost.

BUT, our identity is now wrapped up in the identity of Jesus Christ, and our new life in Him awaits. We can rise up and face these consequences in faith, with grace.



LIE #6 - MY JOY DEPENDS ON OTHERS

I spent many of my years working at a Bible College. These were some of the most precious years I've known. But I learned a lot about my past self by watching the students navigate the gateway to adulthood.

Relationships would start, then break-up, then start again. Hearts would break, and reach out to others for healing. Room-mates would bond, then quarrel, then have to tiptoe around one another when agreements could not be found.

And often in the brokenness of relationships, identities would get lost, and all would seem hopeless.

I remember my own yearning for happiness that I thought could only be found in a significant other. And I remember joy being dashed again and again when those significant others turned out not to be perfect. The dark would want to swallow me whole there because I thought my joy was found in others.

If joy depends on people we will never truly know it.

Truth #6 - My Joy is Found in Jesus

People will disappoint us, and we will disappoint others. Relationships will be imperfect. But true joy is not dependent on imperfect relationships.

True joy is found in the One who is the real joy-giver.

And the joy-giver will use our imperfect, human relationships to display to us His perfection.

And our confidence in His faithfulness increases our joy, even when our natural circumstances threaten it.

Zephaniah 3: 17 shares of a mighty warrior who shields us and takes great delight in us. His love for us is kind, and He rejoices over us with singing.

Our joy is found in Jesus Christ, and as we lean into His life, we will then find joy in our earthly relationships.

LIE #7 - GOD IS NOT CONCERNED WITH MY JOY

A pendulum seems to swing between the ideas that God is concerned with our happiness, and God is concerned with our holiness. Many can't seem to agree that God might be concerned with both.

Our God is in the business of purifying us from our sin, and making us holy, as He is holy.

(1 Peter 1: 15-16)

This reality has led many to believe that our lives need to be lives of penance and strict purification. We pounce on the guilt of others, shaming them for their sin. And we beat ourselves up repeatedly for our wrongdoings and our lack of growth. We see our sin as evidence that God has turned His face from us.

As long as we are living lives of strict conformity, following the rules and our own rigid standards, we believe we are living lives near to God - lives of holiness.

Why would God be concerned with our joy?

Truth #7 - God Enjoys my Joy

One of Jesus' names is Emmanuel, God WITH us. Our God is a very present God. He is near to us. Before Jesus ascended, He told the disciples to ask God for anything in His name, and that God would answer, making our joy complete. (John 16:24).

God longs to complete our joy. We find our joy strengthened when we are weak, because our very present Help is with us.

Just as Paul encouraged the disciples to rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15), our gracious God does the same. He is near to the broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18), and welcomes us into His joy (Matthew 25:21).

Jesus prayed for our joy to be made full (John 17:13), and our God is concerned that it be so. **He delights in those who hope in His steadfast love** (Psalm 147: 11).

Truth Worksheet

It is so important to practice replacing lies with Truth!
Here you can name your lies, then search the Word
for the Truth that will set you free. Write the
corresponding reference.

As you begin to practice the Truth, cross out the lies.
They no longer define you.

Lies I've Believed

But Truth Sets Me Free

God is the true joy-giver. He delights in the joy of His children. But the enemy of our souls works overtime to steal, kill, and destroy that joy. If we take our thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ, our joy can be restored.

As we replace lies with Truth, we will know greater and greater joy in the journey with Jesus..

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