

PART FOUR

Shadowlands

LIVING IN THE LAND OF LAMENT

Joy in Grief

SERIES BIG IDEA:

We experience grace in loss when we turn to and trust in God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4 (NIV)

Only those who mourn can experience comfort.

There is a joy for those in sorrow.

In sorrow, we struggle for joy.

“Appreciation is the purest, strongest form of love. It is the outward-bound kind of love that asks for nothing and gives everything. Research now shows that it is physiologically impossible to be in a state of appreciation and a state of fear at the same time. Thus, appreciation is the antidote to fear.”

Cameron Stauth & Dan Baker, Ph.D. (What Happy People Know p.37)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)

Grief can be a lot like fear.

We fear living without that which we've lost.

Fear and gratitude cannot co-exist.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:8-13 (NIV)

I need Christ, not something that resembles Him. I want H., not something that is like her.

A Grief Observed (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis) (p. 77)

Grief awakens my longing for Christ.

TEACHING BIG IDEA:

I can face anything when Jesus is my everything.

In grief, continually give thanks.

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Begin with an appreciation prayer:

1. Discover the good in my situation. (Philippians 4:8)
2. Speak my appreciation out loud.
3. Pray the possibilities.
4. Trust God with what I cannot control.

I can always find a reason to be thankful when I have Jesus.

MY NOTES:



STAY CONNECTED:

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TEACHING SUMMARY:

We all walk through difficult circumstances and difficult seasons at different times.

During those seasons, it can be difficult to look around and find a reason to be joyful. Scripture speaks about presenting our requests to God in Thanksgiving and when we are in the middle of a mess this can seem like an overwhelming idea.

In Jesus, we can always find a reason to give thanks because when we are in Jesus and He is in us then He is a reason to find thanks.

So rather than looking at the circumstances you are walking through, pause, and remember Who is walking through them with you and give thanks and experience the joy that comes from Him and Him alone.

“True joy is formed in the midst of the difficult seasons of life.” ~ Francis Chan

Jesus wants to be your joy in the middle of your circumstance. Will you turn to Him and trust that His joy is enough?

TALK IT OVER:

Do you believe that Jesus is with you in your trials? Why or why not?

Who or what has helped you develop that belief?

What questions or skepticism do you have about Jesus being with you in the storms of life?

What is one next step you can take today?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

- Mon: 2 Corinthians 1:3-6
- Tue: Matthew 9:14-15; John 14:15-21
- Wed: John 14:25-27
- Thu: Matthew 28:5-7; Luke 24:36-45
- Fri: Hebrews 9:26-28; John 16:33
- Sat: 1 Peter 1:3-9