

3 Tips to Help You Reclaim Joy and Peace in Turbulent Times

On the verge of physical and emotional collapse, I recently arrived back home after my final emergency trip to be with my dear, dying mother. Rejoicing that she was safely home with the Lord, yet exhausted on every level, I was grateful that now I had time to rest, heal and replenish—with no stress. That very day, all the stuff hit the fan!

Why is it that just when we think we can't take any more, the Lord often has other plans?

I've been struggling along with everyone else with all the turbulence, compounded by personal grief and loss. I've hit bottom more than once, yet I am finally starting to rise above it all. Here are a few things that have been helping me to not merely survive, but actually begin to reclaim God's joy and peace.

1. Release expectations and entitlements.

We need to unclench our fists, open our hands and let go of what we thought it would or should be. The prophet Habakkuk was preparing to lose everything in an imminent enemy invasion. After much wrestling, he was finally able to let go, releasing his demand for earthly comforts and choosing to cling to God and His eternal promise of salvation, no matter what might happen.

"Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the yield of the olive fails, and the fields produce no food; though the flocks are cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls— yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3:17-18).

2. Open your senses to all the good that *is* around you now.

When was the last time you stepped outside and just listened to the birds sing? Or actually stopped to smell a fragrant flower? Or gazed at the moon or stars?

This morning, I listened to Christmas music, and found myself dancing in the kitchen!

With so much nonstop toxicity bombarding us, we need to choose to refocus on all the goodness the Lord is showering upon us. To physically take in and savor our blessings. Now. In spite of what we may not have at the moment.

“O, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Ps. 34:8).

3. Actively seek God and His truth.

Between news, social media and our own unreliable minds, it's easy to get depressed, confused, fearful and angry. We desperately want answers to our questions and solutions to the problems. But the harder we try, the deeper down we seem to spiral.

Even people of faith struggle. And possibly feel guilty about not being instantly victorious in the battle. Heartbroken and deeply grieving as I watched my mom shrivel up, one of the most encouraging things was to cling to God's Word. And having written the book *Goodbye for Now* to support those losing a loved one, I was able to read to her the Scripture verses in it about salvation and heaven. Just hearing the promises strengthened my faith—and hers—in a very fearful and unfamiliar time.

The Lord never promised we would understand what He is doing or why. But when we choose to seek Him and stop to listen to what He says, our faith is strengthened, and His peace supernaturally overrides our fears.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Many of us pray the Lord’s prayer, specifically, “Thy will be done.” It never occurred to me that perhaps His will *is* being done! The supreme example in history was Jesus’ death on the cross for us. It looked like God was gone, unloving or out of control. But now we see that it was His plan all along. And those who receive Him will one day be with Him forever in endless joy and peace.

And there, we will never run out of food, money or tissue.
{eoa}

For more detailed “self-care checklists for survival” in times of loss, divorce, grief or trauma, see Formerly A Wife, Goodbye for Now and Love Our Vets: Restoring Hope for Families of Veterans with PTSD.

Welby O’Brien holds a master’s degree in counseling from Portland State University and a teaching degree from Biola University, and based on her own life journey, she has authored Love Our Vets: Restoring Hope for Families of Veterans with PTSD (), Goodbye for Now (grief support) and Formerly A Wife (divorce support). She is also a contributing author to Chicken Soup for the Soul: Divorce and Recovery, Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Spirit of America, as well as Shepherding Women in Pain. Welby initiated and continues to facilitate the spouse and family support network known as Love Our Vets – PTSD Family Support, LLC. Join Welby and thousands of others on Facebook: Love Our Vets – PTSD Family Support, LLC on Facebook or at .