

Is Your Rose Garden Full of Thorns?

In 1960, Joe South wrote a song called “Rose Garden”— a song with a phrase that caught people’s attention and was how most people remember the song; that phrase is “I never promised you a rose garden.”

Growing up, we would visit my grandmother in New Jersey. One of the things I remember is her rose garden. It always looked stunning to me. However, when I would walk among the roses, I still had to be aware of the thorns.

Are there days when you feel that the thorns are overwhelming the beauty of the roses? To put that another way, do you have days when the pain outweighs the joy?

As believers, we are often surprised when life does not go as planned. However, we are told in 1 Peter 4:12 (TPT), “Beloved friends, if life gets extremely difficult, with many tests, don’t be bewildered as though something strange was overwhelming you.”

The season that we find ourselves in, for many, is where life is not going as planned. We are hard-pressed on every side to conform to a worldly set of standards that is at war with biblical standards. It is comforting to know that God is not overwhelmed by all that is going on. Therefore, we don’t need to be overwhelmed either.

We find a powerful antidote in verse 13, as we are instructed to rejoice rather than be overwhelmed. Peter is saying that where we have great joy, we will also have great strength. And where we have great strength, we will not be overwhelmed.

Going one step further in verse 14, we discover a promise of blessing. Scripture is clear that when we are insulted because

we stand on God's Word and faithfulness, we will be GREATLY blessed. Why greatly blessed? Because "the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. On their part, He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified" (1 Pet. 4:14, AMPC).

The thorns have deeply scratched many and you are feeling the pain. God is saying He has released His healing balm over those wounds. Realign your focus to see the beauty that He has placed around you. Allow the song of the redeemed to arise within you and turn into a warrior's battle cry.

The team at RHM International (Podcast – "Real Truth with Ruth") is praying for you today that God will give you the strength and power to stand your ground. We are praying you will have holy boldness and determination to stand in alignment with the Word of God, no matter what culture is saying. And that you will be greatly encouraged as you focus on Lord as your strength and your song.

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Ruth Hendrickson is an ordained pastor, itinerant speaker, ministry trainer and board-certified biblical counselor who has extensive experience in the development, training and oversight of emotional healing ministry teams, recovery ministries, prophetic ministry, prayer ministries and women's ministry. In addition, she is a course facilitator for Patricia King Institute and Charisma courses. She writes for Elijah List and Charisma and has a podcast titled Real Truth with Ruth. Through biblically based teachings and practical applications infused with love and laughter, her goal is to introduce people not only to the living God who saves but also to the God who desires an intimate relationship with each one of us. Her latest book, *Everyday Prophetic*, will help you find the prophetic voice that God has given you. Ruth is an avid, unsweetened iced tea drinker who loves warm weather, palm trees and beaches! She believes that she should live in the

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