

Joyful Strength

“A contented heart is a calm sea in the midst of all storms.”
– Anonymous

Are you familiar with this type of interaction:

“Hey, how are you doin’?”

“Oh, I’m hanging in there.”

Let me tell you – nowhere in the Bible does God tell us to hang. Jesus did not hang on the cross for you to “hang in there.” He gave us access to abundant life spilling into eternal life in paradise. Don’t be confused – “abundant” does not mean effortless. We should not tie our joy to our circumstances.

I live in Central Virginia. We have some severe thunderstorms here in the Commonwealth, resulting in power outages, downed trees, trashcans tumbling down the street. You know what I’m talking about. No matter where you live, you see the chaos and destruction a windy downpour can cause.

A gale does not always wholly lay a tree out. It is not uncommon to see many sticks and twigs have been snapped from their branches and are just hanging, tangled, among the more substantial branches.

In the same way, the storms of our lives can cause us to get disconnected, especially if we are weak and dry to the point of being brittle and easily broken. One gust of the unexpected and SNAP! We can do nothing but hang in there. We lose our place. We lose our peace.

If you meet your contentment’s criteria only when _____ happens or if this person _____ or because you feel _____, then peace and happiness will be hard to come by. People will let you down. You will disappoint yourself. Storms happen.

Set your thoughts on the things of the Father and you will be kept in perfect peace. When those around you sway and creak and threaten to break from the unexpected forces pushing our lives around, you will stay strong. You will remain content because “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10, MEV).

Father God, as I look to You, I know who You are and who I am in You. I can find peace just loving You and praising You, even in times when I don't feel contented. Because I know You are the all-knowing, most powerful one, who I have chosen to be in control of my destiny. {eoa}

Dr. Victor Torres is an internationally respected evangelist, theologian, award-winning author and mentor to pastors and leaders. Until the trajectory of his life changed through his mother's prayers, Victor Torres was a heroin addict and gang warlord on the mean streets of Brooklyn. Through the ministry of David Wilkerson and Nicky Cruz, Victor had a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ and came to realize that God had a purpose for his life. Now he lives to prepare others for theirs. For over five decades, Victor has been recognized as a contemporary father of the faith, traveling to more than 30 countries, carrying a Spirit-led awareness of people's needs. Through Christ-centered, biblically-based principles, Torres uses his global influence to reach hundreds of thousands through podcasts, radio, television, street ministry and worldwide crusades. Dr. Torres is the founder and lead pastor of New Life Outreach Church in Richmond, Virginia, a thriving multi-cultural, interdenominational church with ministries in Brazil, Dominican Republic, Peru and Africa. Torres is also founder of New Life for Adults and Youth, one of the largest and most respected addiction recovery organizations in the country, helping transform hundreds of thousands of lives. Victor and Carmen, his partner in life and ministry, have four grown children and eleven grandchildren.

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