

Why You Can Have Unceasing Joy No Matter the Heartache

“God gave us free will to choose mind over matter or let the matters of life control our minds. The choice is ours, and that important choice will determine the direction of our faith and our ability to enjoy God’s joy and peace, even when our hearts are heavy. Unsinkable optimism, hope and faith hinge on where we choose to focus our thoughts, not on life’s circumstances.” –Proverbs 31 Encouragement for Today Devotion, “The Year I Didn’t Want to Buy an Easter Dress,” Tracie Miles

I’m not going to lie, today’s P31 devotion was hard to write. I remember the day I described in the devotion so vividly. It still tugs at my heart, remembering the tears trickling down my face while driving home from shopping with my Kaitlyn, after saying those hasty words about not being excited for Easter last year due to the breakup of my marriage and the heaviness of my heart.

I had been leaning so much on my faith and spending time with God every day, even on those days when that was about all I had the strength to do. But yet, my thoughts were still sinking my attitude and my outlook, and as a result, I found myself on the shore of a pessimistic, negative mind.

And I knew that wasn’t where I wanted to land. Much less live. And serious change was needed. Can you relate?

I certainly still have days when I feel sad or angry or frustrated. Days when I wish I had a magic wand to fix all the problems in my life, take away all the fears, and make all my dreams come true. But life is never going to be perfectly positive—so our only choice is to focus on our perfectly positive God and ask Him to transform our minds and the way we think, even when our circumstances remain the same. Our joy

and peace hang in the balance of that decision.

I've learned that I can be happy no matter what is going on in my life—as long I keep implementing the three strategies I talk about in *Unsinkable Faith* and continually practice the reshaping of my thoughts through the power of Christ.

Friend, if I can do it, so can you, regardless of what you're facing today. How am I so sure of that? Because this is the truth Paul shared in the Bible in Romans 12:2a (NLT): "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." These are instructions that promise we can have victory over our thoughts. Isn't that exciting? None of us is too far gone to be changed, and it's never too late to make the intentional choice to think positive!

I promise you this, my friend, you can bet your bottom dollar I'm buying a new Easter dress this year. In fact, you should subscribe to my blog if we're not already connected, because I plan on posting an Easter photo of my three amazing kids and me just to prove it, even if I'm having a really bad hair day. Smiles.

Trust me, I still have some heavy burdens to carry and wounds still trying to heal. There are still problems to sift through, more unknowns to face and more changes to come. But the one thing that will never change is the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ. It is because of Him I can be positive, and it is Him I can be grateful to for helping me learn the value of controlling my thoughts so they stop controlling my life. Not only at Easter, but every day of the year.

My prayer is that you will allow Him to do the same for you. Beginning today. {eo}

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Christ She is the author of two best-selling books, Your Life Still Counts: How God Uses Your Past To Create A Beautiful Future and Stressed Less Living: Finding God's Peace In Your Chaotic World. Her newest book is Unsinkable Faith: God-Filled Strategies for Transforming the Way You Think, Feel and Live (April 2017). She is a contributing author to the popular Zondervan NIV Women's Devotional Bible, and the Proverbs 31 Encouragement for Today Daily Devotional Book, in addition to being a monthly contributing writer for the Proverbs 31 Ministries Encouragement for Today daily devotions, which reach nearly one million people per day around the world with encouragement from God's Word. Tracie also holds the role as COMPEL Manager at Proverbs 31, has 3 children and lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. You can connect with Tracie on her blog at [and](#) all social media outlets.