

Joyce Meyer: You Can Be Pitiful or Powerful

Do you want to be happy – I mean, *really* happy? I believe that deep down we all want to be happy and enjoy our lives. We can spend a lot of time and energy trying to do things that will make us happy, but our own efforts will never truly satisfy us.

That's because God doesn't want our minds to be on ourselves all the time. He wants us to look past the things that are happening in our own lives and reach out to others and bless them. Because when our focus is on ourselves, we usually end up feeling sorry for ourselves and get caught up in self-pity.

I used to have a real problem with self-pity. I felt sorry for myself because I'd been abused by my dad, and sometimes I felt sorry for myself when my husband, Dave, would go out and play golf while I stayed home with our kids. I wasted so many days having pity parties for all types of reasons.

In the first few years of our marriage, Dave tried to keep me happy, while I carried on with a bad attitude. But one day he finally told me, "You know what? I'm not spending my life trying to make you happy. You can get happy or not get happy, but I'm going to be happy. I'm not going to feel sorry for you because it won't help you." And you know, even though it was really hard to hear at the time, it was the best thing he could have said to me. Because when you struggle with self-pity, if other people feel sorry for you it just feeds the problem.

Now that doesn't mean we can never be sad. But we need to understand that if we hang on to our pain for too long, it can become self-pity, and we can become addicted to it. The good news is God gives us the tools to work through our feelings in

a healthy way and not let them control us.

When God was dealing with me about having a pitiful attitude, He brought me to Galatians 5:19-21 (AMP), which gives a list of things the Bible calls sin. It says, "Now the practices of the sinful nature are clearly evident: they are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality (total irresponsibility, lack of self-control), idolatry, sorcery, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions [that promote heresies], envy, drunkenness, riotous behavior, and other things like these."

As I was studying those scriptures, I got an eye-opening revelation: Self-pity is idolatry. When we feel sorry for ourselves, we turn inward and idolize ourselves ... essentially everything becomes about "me." People who are focused on themselves never see what they can and should be doing for other people.

We should have compassion for other people who are hurting. In the Bible, there are times when Jesus was moved with compassion, and then He would go and help people. If we have compassion toward others and keep our mind off of ourselves, we will be much happier. We will also trust God to meet our needs and bring justice in our lives when we are hurting or mistreated, rather than getting into self-pity.

The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 (AMP), "But without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him." That means God rewards those who are faithful and who wait on Him. If you've been hurt and you have put your trust and confidence in God as you seek Him, you have a reward coming!

I want to encourage you to keep a notebook of your blessings, the special little things that God does for you, prayers that

He answers. And when you're tempted to have a pity party, read that book and have a talk with yourself.

King David talked to himself when he started to feel depressed. He said, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become restless and disturbed within me? Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence" (Ps. 42:5, AMP).

I am so thankful that God is working in my life, taking what has happened to me and using it to help other people. The best treatment in the world for sadness and self-pity is to help somebody else. That's when we get our minds off of our own problems and trust God to help us and do what's best for us.

No matter what happens, be determined – with God's help – to keep a good attitude, remain thankful and avoid self-pity. Then God will bring restoration, peace, joy and real happiness to your life. {eoa}

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 135 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *The Power of Thank You (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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