

The Best Thing You Can Do When Life Crashes Down On You

Life is hard, isn't it?

Disappointments hammer us ferociously and relentlessly while discouragement bullies us daily. Difficult people refuse to leave us alone and rejection is often a constant companion.

There have been hard things in my life that have threatened to crush the very purpose for my existence. I know that you have experienced the *hard* in life as well, although yours might look different than mine.

I may not understand what you are going through today, but I do know the one who knows your pain and I am intimately acquainted with the one who hears your gut-wrenching cries. In my life, I can assure you, it has been through the deepest pain that God has harvested the most vibrant fruit.

Although we would desire for the ability to live a vibrant life, excluding painful experiences, it just isn't so. The most beautiful gardens and the sweetest fruit in life are often found where joy and sorrow meet.

There are many challenging occurrences in life over which we are powerless. We might even believe that these unwelcome guests are mangling our ability to live a life of beauty and productivity.

My friend, absolutely nothing could be further from God's truth! If you feel that you are in a circumstance today that you are unable to do anything about, let me assure you that God wants you to do something with it. He wants you to rename that devastatingly hard place, "Joy."

You might not be able to change that place, but you can allow

it to change *you* to be more like Jesus. He wants you to rediscover Him there.

Two thousand years ago, a man named Peter wrote a beautiful letter to a group of people who were suffering. These Christians, persecuted by the cruel and corrupt ruler Nero, had been driven from their homes and forced to live in alien lands. It is to this group of scattered, broken souls that Peter writes:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that does not fade away, kept in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Peter instantly turns these broken hearts to the lifegiving option of praise. Paul breaks out into a written song as his words travel from his heart to the suffering first-century Christians—and to you and me. His call to worship all that is eternally hopeful has not diminished in the two millennia since it was written.

Peter immediately turned the attention of the persecuted sojourners away from the hardships they were facing and defiantly toward all that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Peter reminded those early Christians to travel through and even beyond the painful days of life. The first lesson that Peter presents is to worship and remember.

When your life collides with human suffering and pain, lift your hands in the air and began to worship. Break out into a song of faith before the fleeting moment of suffering becomes your reality. Interrupt your disappointment with a melody so rich and so deep that heaven gasps in wonder.

I have learned that I am able to sing and cry at the same time—and I often do. While tears are coursing down my middle-aged cheeks, I raise my voice to the Father and worship Him. When my heart is breaking with the pain only a mother knows, I refuse to let my unique song become a dirge. I will sing in spite of pain, in the face of discouragement and defy depression.

Peter can't sing for me and I can't sing for you. You must choose to bless the Lord at the worst moment of your life. You must determine that nothing short of death will deny you of the audacious ability to sing in the dark.

After Peter's reminder to bless the Lord, he wrote an unforgettable list of stunning reminders. Peter, in the face of vicious persecution, kept his eyes, his heart, and his mind set firmly on all that Christ has done for us. This is Peter's list of reminders that calls believers to worship rather than to curl up in pain:

—We have been given a great mercy.

—We have been born again to a living hope.

—The resurrection of Jesus from the dead changed everything for us.

—We are protected by the power of God.

—We have a faith that leads to salvation.

The clarion call across the ages to troubled and broken people is to worship and remember. I can do that; can you? I can set my default to the sure settings of worship and remember. My tears do not comfort me but worship miraculously has the power to restore and renew. When I choose to rehash my pain and my problems, I weaken myself, but when I recall the goodness of the Lord, I am filled with unstoppable power.

My life, without the determination to worship and remember,

will be unable to produce anything of value or worth. However, when I choose to bless the Lord and recall His promises toward me, the vibrant life that He promised washes over me like a restorative waterfall. I am captured by all that He is as I choose to open my mouth and sing. {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical, biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. Carol has written 11 books, including *Significant*, *StormProof* and *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.