

the sun. God is a God of beauty. You also are a creation of God and you are beautiful. Maybe now you feel more like a pile of ashes; you are mourning; your spirit is in heaviness. God sent His Son to redeem you unto Himself, *“to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion [or anywhere you are], to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified”* (Isaiah 61:2b, 3). God wants to exchange your ashes for beauty. God wants to change your mourning into joy. He wants to change your heaviness into praise. How? By giving the Son of God, Jesus Christ, all of your ashes—your sin, your mourning, your heaviness, your problems, your self-centeredness. He wants to give you beauty, cleansing, refreshing, pureness, righteousness, forgiveness. Confess and receive. You will become a tree of righteousness. You will be like a plant with fresh, green leaves. Exchange your dried up withered leaves for succulent leaves, a bountiful plant watered by God, full of sweet fruit. How? Repent and believe. Cast off unbelief. Throw away despair. Accept the love and grace God has for you. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow. *“O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name.”* (Psalm 105:1)

Right now, thank God for 10 or 20 things.

Giving thanks is a weapon of rejoicing.

Thank You, Lord, for. . . . *“Make known his deeds among the people.”* Tell someone today what God has done. *“Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him.”*

Singing praises is a weapon of rejoicing.

Do you know the song “Jesus Loves Me”? *“Talk ye of all his wondrous works.”* Tell someone about something wonderful God has done. God makes beautiful sunsets. *“Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth”* (Psalm 105:3-5).

Praying is a weapon of rejoicing.

Tell God how wonderful He is! O mighty God, how wonderful You are to love the world, while heavens before You bow. I see the sun, moon, and stars and think of Your matchless grace. You are the Creator and there is nothing too hard for You. *“Ab Lord GOD! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee”* (Jeremiah 32:17). You loved me SO MUCH that You came down from heaven to become a baby. You lived among men, and You know what it feels like to suffer, so You can identify with man in his pain. But You overcame! You died as a sacrifice for sin so my sin could be forgiven. You conquered death and rose from the grave! You are above all people, all circumstances, all situations, all devils.

SLAYING THE DRAGON OF DEPRESSION

With The Weapon
Of Rejoicing



by
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You tell me to be happy. Rejoice? I can't even see because of these tears. I can't stop crying. I don't even know why I'm reading this paper on overcoming. I've been trying to overcome depression. But I start to think negatively and it spirals down, down, down, and I can't stop the whirlwind. I'm on the bottom and can't get up. *"My tears have been my meat day and night"* (Psalm 42:3). David in the Bible said these words. So how did he go from that to this: *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance"* (Psalm 42:5).

Why are you crying? Why is your soul disquieted? Many times it is because of unrealistic expectations. I would think — If only I weren't so emotional. Why am I like this? I used to be smart in school, but now I am dumb. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. I want to talk right. I want to be right. Sigh. These are unrealistic expectations. My general makeup comes from God. *"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD?"* (Exodus 4:10-11). He made me this way for His purpose. God Himself is emotional. He feels and He gets grieved. *"Wherefore I [God] was grieved with that generation, and*

said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways" (Hebrews 3:10). If God is emotional, it is not a bad thing. *"Jesus wept"* (John 14:35). We can change this weeping into rejoicing by thinking, *"And he [God] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [frailties], that the power of Christ may rest upon me"* (II Corinthians 12:9). It is because I am weak, I cannot do it myself; I need God to help me. God chooses to use weak, helpless people that His glory may be shown. Instead of thinking why am I weak like this, think God can get the glory through me. I accept God's grace. Think, His strength is made perfect in my weakness. I receive God's strength.

Rejoice! Jesus can meet your needs. He knows all about you. *"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well"* (Psalm 139:14). Instead of looking to your partner or friend to meet your needs, look to Jesus. Jesus is able! He wants you to go to Him. *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19). He wants the best for you. Prove Him. Sometimes we expect too much of ourselves. If we set our expectations too high, so that we cannot attain our goals, we set ourselves up for failure. Only God is perfect. We can rejoice in knowing that our God is **So Big** and **So**

Great. He is the Super Being. We are humans. We are limited, but God is the Creator. *"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob [put your name here], and he that formed thee, O Israel [your name], Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior"* (Isaiah 43:1-3).

At certain cycles in the month, or different seasons in our life, we may go into a physical depression because of our hormones. We may need to go see a doctor. Here are some other things that will help. Do exercises. Exercising increases the oxygen levels in your body and also releases the endorphins, the happy hormones that make you feel better. Get out in the fresh air. Fresh air is cleansing. View greenery. Green is pleasant and easy on the eyes. If there is nothing green to see, buy a plant. Plants give off oxygen. Buy real flowers. View creation: fields, mountains, rivers, trees. If all around you is cement and buildings, look up at the sky, clouds, stars. O God, how great Thou art! *"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands"* (Psalm 102:25). View the beauty. *"He hath made everything beautiful in his time"* (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Sit in the grass. Feel the warmth of