

Flourishing in the Tearful Season

When Life Hands You Lemons

We all know the saying, "When life hands you lemons... make lemonade." Another similar saying is, "Every cloud has a silver lining." Or this one: "Without the rain there would be no rainbows." Into every life, challenges will come, and tears will flow. How do we flourish even in the sorrowful, tearful times?

In Psalm 56, David writes about God being aware of his tears. Yes, David was human, and he too, cried. Psalm 56 is one of the psalms that we know exactly when it was written; it is given in the note: "When the Philistines had seized him in Gath." (See 1 Samuel 21:10-22:1). Fleeing from Saul, David went to Gath and pretended to be insane, and so they gave him asylum.

While hiding out, pretending to not be in his right mind, he pens this beautiful psalm where despite everything David says he is placing his trust in the Lord (v. 3-4). Even though he places his trust in the Lord, David still sheds some tears. Verse 8 says, **"Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record?"**

Despite all of David's coming and goings, there was comfort in the fact that God kept a particular account of all his movements, and numbered all of the steps he took. God sees every tear that falls and lists them in His book; not one is insignificant and not one is lost.

This verse is an allusion to a very ancient Roman custom. In a time of mourning—at a funeral—a friend went to one in sorrow, and wiped away the tears from the person's eyes with a piece of cloth, and squeezed the tears into a small bottle. This bottle was carefully preserved as a memorial of friendship and sorrow and laid on the tomb of the deceased. David is comforted in, and certain that, **NOTHING** that he is experiencing is insignificant to God. When we place our trust in Him, we can know that every detail of our lives—even every tear that we cry—has purpose and meaning.

In Psalm 34, written during another difficult time in David's life, he writes these words, **"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (v. 18)."** Not only is God aware of every tear that you cry, we have the promise that He is close to you in those times of sorrow and grief. He isn't standing afar watching as you ache. He is close to you, desiring to comfort you. God observes His children with compassion and tender concern; He is afflicted by their afflictions, and God will not forget the sorrows of His people.

The next time life hands you lemons, dark clouds, or lots of rain, trust that God sees and knows every tear that you shed, and He is close beside you, walking with you in the pain.



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Flourishing in Relationships: Conversation Starters

Here are some great conversations starters as you gather with your friends this month.

- ◆ In May we celebrate Mother's Day. Share a favorite memory of your mother.
- ◆ If you are a mom, what is your greatest joys about being a mom? What are you biggest struggles being a mom?
- ◆ Who has been a spiritual mother (mentor) to you?
- ◆ What are you learning about yourself lately?
- ◆ What's the biggest struggle in your life right now?
- ◆ What do you do to get through sorrowful seasons in life? Who do you turn to for support?
- ◆ What's your favorite verse that you turn to for comfort when you are sad, sorrowful or grieving?
- ◆ How have you experienced grief turning into joy in your life?
- ◆ How do you support a friend or loved-one who is going through grief?

"... Jesus enters into our sadness, takes us by the hand, pulls us gently up to where we can stand and invites us to dance." Henri J. Nouwen

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you flourish in the ordinary season:

<https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Processing Grief*, focusing on Romans 5:1-5.

Devotional: *Mourning into Dancing* based on Psalm 30:11-12.

Craft Idea: *You Turn My Mourning into Dancing*

Flourishing Story: Lt. Colonel SherryI Van Cleef shares her personal story of *Flourishing in Grief*.

Flourishing in Prayer: Prayer Idea

During times of grief, loss or sadness, prayer might be hard, but it is important to pray even when the tears flow. How do you pray through the tears?

Pour out your grief to God. Be honest with Him. He knows what you're feeling, so tell Him the truth. ***Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief.*** Psalm 31:9

Ask God to comfort you. ***Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*** Matthew 5:4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Ask God to give His peace. ***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** Philippians 4:6-7

Ask God to fill you with hope. ***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*** Romans 15:13



This month read of Bible women who experienced sorrow and pain.

Flourishing in the Word

Spend the month of May reading of women in the Bible who had their own sorrow, grief and suffering and how the Lord worked in and through them during these seasons of sorrow.

May 1	Genesis 16:1-16	May 17	Esther 7-8
May 2	Genesis 21:1-21	May 18	Esther 9-10
May 3	Genesis 29:16-30:24	May 19	Luke 1:1-25, 55-67
May 4	Genesis 36:16-20	May 20	Luke 1:26-38
May 5	Genesis 38:6-30	May 21	Luke 2:1-35
May 6	Exodus 1:1-2:10	May 22	Matthew 2:13-23, John 19:25-30
May 7	Ruth 1-2	May 23	Mark 5:21-34
May 8	Ruth 3-4	May 24	Luke 7:11-17
May 9	1 Samuel 1:1-2:11	May 25	Luke 7:36-50
May 10	2 Samuel 11:1-27	May 26	Luke 13:10-17
May 11	2 Samuel 12:1-25	May 27	John 4:1-42
May 12	1 Kings 17:8-24	May 28	John 8:1-11
May 13	2 Kings 4:1-7	May 29	John 11:1-44
May 14	Esther 1-2	May 30	Luke 8:2-3, Matthew 27:55-61
May 15	Esther 3-4	May 31	John 20:1-18
May 16	Esther 5-6		

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Cathedral City, CA held a Pampered Chef Party to raise funds for world Services.

Coeur d'Alene, ID did a study on Max Lucado's book, *You Were Made for This Moment*, which focuses on the life of Ruth.

Concord, CA made "Blessing Jars" for the men living in their Transitional Shelter.

Hayward, CA had a Soup Social.

Kona, HI is using the book *Joy Revealed* by Allen Satterlee, to study Philippians.

Longview, WA dyed silk scarves at a local shop in their community.

Oceanside, CA held a self-defense class.

Sacramento, CA had a Peace themed Poetry reading at Home League. Ladies brought their favorite poems and read them aloud.

Santa Cruz, CA has implemented a 10-minute spot in each WM meeting for sharing cost-saving ideas such as budget cooking ideas, how to save at the supermarket, and sharing opportunities and programs within the community.

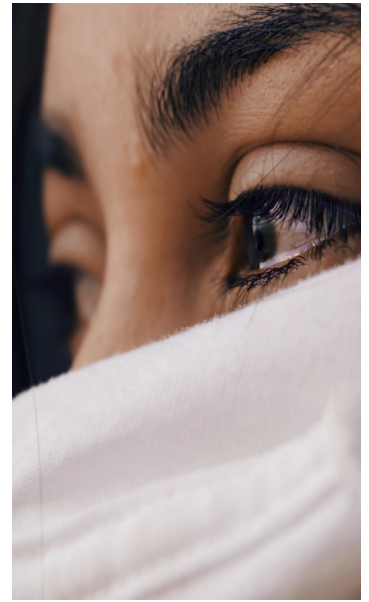
San Francisco Kroc, started making scarves, beanies, and lap blankets last summer and distributed them when the weather started getting cold. *What a great idea to get started on in your community!*

Washougal, WA put on an escape room event and invited the men to join the women. (They all made it out!)

Flourishing Through Tears

In her article, “Quiet Time When Pain is Loud,” by Ashley Kintzel, she shares these tips to pursuing quiet time with the Lord when the noise from our pain is so loud.

1. **Feel with Your Father.** In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37-39), Jesus doesn’t simply say, “I’m fine.” He openly shares His pain and grief with His heavenly Father.
2. **Don’t White-Knuckle It.** When we think we can do it in our own strength, we are “actively rejecting the belief that God is in control.” We see this illustrated in the life of Peter, when in Matthew 14:22-33, Peter walks out to Jesus on the water. As long as He was looking at Jesus, he stayed standing. But the minute he looked away, he began to sink.
3. **Ask for a Willing Spirit.** Let’s be honest, sometimes we don’t FEEL like spending time with the Lord, especially during times of grief and tears. That is the time to pray like David, **“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me”** (Psalm 51:12). When we don’t feel like it, we can ask God to give us a willing spirit.



Read Ashley’s article here: <https://wholeheartedquiettime.com/blogs/blog/quiet-time-when-pain-is-loud>

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:18



Flourishing Fun in May

1. Celebrate National Bike Month by going for a bike ride.
2. Celebrate National BBQ month by holding a BBQ.
3. May 5th is Cinco de May; celebrate the Mexican culture.
4. Celebrate Mother’s Day (May 14) with mom, your family, or with someone who doesn’t have anyone to celebrate with.
5. May 15th is Chocolate Chip Day. Bake some chocolate chip cookies.
6. May is National Walking Month. Take a walk with friends.
7. Plant a garden.
8. Try a new restaurant.
9. Take a class—like art, or baking, or dance. Try something new!
10. Watch a sunset.