

“You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever.” Psalm 30:11-12 (NIV)

These verses sing out a deep joy that isn't just a feeling of happiness, but something so much deeper.

There is nothing better than the positive experiences that come when you are on the verge of deep despair. That feeling of deep joy when we have been delivered from something for which there seemed no end. Whether its being delivered from a health issue, unemployment, or any type of traumatic experience, What is the first thing we feel like doing? In theory, that should be praise God and thank Him for guiding and leading us through into a place of deliverance. This may not be our first automatic reaction, but I hope its at least very high up the list!

This verse has spoken to me personally about being more joyful. Have I got things that are still unresolved in my life? Yes! Quite a few things are on that list. But has God led me through other things already for which I should be giving praise and thanksgiving on a daily basis. The answer to that is a huge YES! To give an example, my 2023 was a tough year. I became severely ill - possibly life threateningly so - and before I had had a chance to rehabilitate myself enough to get able to search for jobs or even walk very far we got evicted. It took months to get into our new house. We were blessed that family was able to take us in for 2 months from the last day in the old house until the day we had a house to move into. In some ways this slowed my recovery, and it certainly cost us more as my other half works full time and couldn't get the time off and I was only able to pack a few boxes myself, but living with family was also a blessing because they chivvied me on to go out more and took me to places I probably wouldn't have gone to otherwise. And now we have a roof over our heads again and its in a nicer area, we have our own parking spaces and my world has opened up with the possibility of searching for jobs, going out and meeting people, being a part of church activities in evenings without the fear of having to park further away than I could safely walk. So I have loads to give thanks for - life itself should be enough to fill me with joy - but also shelter, freedom, the experiences of the places I otherwise wouldn't have seen, a supportive husband, and so many other things. Have all my troubles finished? No. But if I take the time to think back, even just a little, it takes very little thought to remember something to be grateful to God for.

What are you grateful to God for today? Try to think of at least one thing that has happened recently that has put a smile your face and reflect on God's goodness in that situation before finishing with the prayer below.

Pray

Father God, we know you are there in the good, the bad and the terrible parts of our lives. Please help us to remember all the good things that have happened in our lives and to not to forget them when the challenges come. We know the joy you give is eternal and we ask to be partakers in this joy while living on the earth by giving you praise and thanksgiving and thank you now specifically for the things you've brought to mind while we've been reading this devotional. You are an amazing God and we thank you for all the strength of character and faith we gain during the storms of life and for the periods of rest and joy that help us reflect and understand our growth seasons. Thank you for turning sadness into dancing and our sackcloth into joy. We lift this prayer through the name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ and our advocate, the Holy Spirit. Amen.