



Dear Partners and Friends,

Learning to respond to difficult situations with a spiritual response is something every believer should practice. In the same way that a police officer will practice the proper procedure in responding to a call or a paramedic trains to know how to respond to an emergency, every believer needs to have the spiritual response well-rehearsed.

There have been instances when I was caught off guard by a financial situation or an unexpected emergency in my family. In the situations where I responded with a spiritual response, I walked through that time easier and sometimes quicker than others. But in the situations where I responded with a carnal, emotional, unspiritual response, my progress was slower and more difficult. I actually did not have progress until I moved out of the wrong response and began to act on the Word.

The Holy Spirit gives us instruction of how to respond in the difficult situation. He says to count it joy.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; James 1:2

The Berkely translation tells us to "...consider it maximum joy." That is supposed to be our first response. I have to admit that I have had to practice making this my first response. Sometimes, I went through a few different responses before I arrived at this one! I have cried, worried, talked to everyone about the situation, went to Google to search for details, and many other futile responses. When I finally decided to respond with the joy of the Lord, I began to have the victory, wisdom, or peace that I needed in that moment.

Joy is a spiritual force that abides in the heart of every believer. It is not based on what happens. Happiness is based on what happens. Joy is a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22). The joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). When you respond in joy, you respond in the spiritual strength that the Lord has provided for your victory.

Notice the instruction of the Spirit in the following verse. This is supposed to be how we respond to the difficult things we encounter in the last days.

*In which last season you are to be **constantly rejoicing with a joy that expresses itself in a triumphant exuberance**, although for a little while at the present time if perchance there is need for it, you have been made sorrowful in the midst of many different kinds of testings. (I Peter 1:6 Wuest)*

When things come to bring sorrow, we should respond with joy. This is how we deal with difficult things spiritually. This is a spiritual response.

We can reject the sorrow. Sorrow will deplete your strength. Worry will negate your faith. Grief, heaviness, and despair will weigh you down and make it difficult for you to hear from God or follow the leading of the Spirit. Proverbs 12:25 says, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down..." Proverbs 13:12 reveals, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick..."

Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23 AMPC

Spiritual Responses

Rejoicing is a spiritual response that maintains the health of your heart. Joy keeps us in the flow of victory where the Lord can move in our situations.

Blessed is **the people that know the joyful sound**: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. Psalm 89:15

How happy are **those who have learned how to praise You**; those who journey *through life* by the light of Your face. Psalm 89:15 VOICE

Blessed are **the people who know the passwords of praise**, who shout on parade in the bright presence of God Psalm 89:15 MESSAGE

Do you know the joyful sound? Have you learned how to praise the Lord despite the current condition or circumstance? Do you know the passwords of praise that will unlock the doors and open the secret passage out of the trouble and into the victory?

Paul and Silas were making a joyful noise in a difficult situation. Acts 16 contains the details of their story. They were preaching in Philippi having been directed there supernaturally by the Lord. Paul exercised the authority of Jesus name to set a young slave girl free from demon possession (Acts 16:18). The people who owned her were furious and made up lies about Paul and Silas which resulted in them being beaten publicly and thrown into prison.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. **And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God:** and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately **all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.** Acts 16:23-26

Their response was a spiritual response of rejoicing. They activated the passwords of praise! You and I can do the same thing in every adverse situation. It will require advanced preparation. Practice joy in the small adversities and you will gain skill. When a larger problem comes, you will be ready to rejoice knowing that the joy of the Lord is your strength.

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OUR GIFT TO YOU!

Many people are only focused on what makes them happy in life. As a believer our focus should be on joy, instead of happiness. The joy of the Lord is our strength and a strong defense. Joy is a flow of the kingdom and a companion to our faith. Pastor Michelle emphasizes the will of the Lord to provide us with His joy and to enable us to live in a fullness of joy. This series will encourage you to access and maintain your supply of joy.





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