

Walk This Way:

The Joy Journey

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This book is dedicated to everyone awaiting a promise.

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## Preface

The wind was blowing cool, crisp, and mightily in between each finger. It was in that moment that the thought occurred to me, “who is this God that cares about the smallest of details, this God who thinks of things that I would have never even thought to have asked for?” That was the first time that I realized how intimately involved God was in my life and how tangible his promises were. It would be a moment that would forever change how I began to live each day, a turning point in my daily walk.

I am not sure where you are in your life right now and why you have been led to this book but I can tell you what my prayer is for you specifically...

*Lord Jesus, Abba Father, Adonai, may the person reading this book right now walk away changed forever. May your transforming tangible love be imputed into their every moment as they go about each day. May joy no longer be something they put on once in a while but instead become what they are known for as they follow your lead and do what it is that they have been created for. And lastly Lord, when it is all said and done, may they know you, the one true God, and Jesus your son whom you sent. I pray Lord that they become not just hearers of the word but doers. In your Precious son's name Jesus I decree, Amen.*

Beloved you were meant to have hope, to believe by faith in what you cannot see, you were meant to be the Lord's walking promise here on Earth. Which means you were meant to heal the sick, bind up the broken hearted, help the blind see, move mountains, prosper in times of famine, raise the dead, and endure when it seems impossible. You and I should be a living, breathing, and Spirit filled replica of Jesus Christ. In fact, we were called to do even greater things than he did on the Earth.

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and ask him to come into your life, he comes in and makes you a new creation. You forfeit your citizenship here in the World for your new citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. Picture it; once you pray that prayer of Salvation and accept Jesus into your heart he changes you. You become this Spirit being dwelling inside an Earthly vessel. Once you forfeit your citizenship in the World you also became an enemy of the World and its ruler satan. Satan now wants to stop Jesus from completing his work within you and he does this by stopping you from bearing fruit. A believer of Jesus Christ who walks in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is Christ's disciple and a threat to this World. You see, the devil wants souls and once you have made the decision to accept Christ into your heart and allow him to have his way with your life; satan will only be able to steal, kill, and destroy you if you allow him.

In my life and in the life of many believers I have noticed that the first thing he tries to steal is our joy which is why I wrote this book. Beloved, I want you to prosper as your soul prospers. I want you to walk in contentment each and every day. Before we can go any further, there are 2 important things that you must know ...

1. The devil has limited power and is on a short leash. He can try to steal, kill, and destroy you but because of the blood of Jesus you have the power and authority to stop him.

2. Joy and Happiness are not one in the same. Happiness is a feeling you get when things happen to you. Joy, oh-that comes from above. Joy is a choice of faith, it's a shout of praise in the midst of your waiting, it's in a child's smile, in a song of worship, when you win, and when you lose. It is accessible to those that know him.

I am excited for you as you read and experience day to day transformation into the image of Christ, each day learning more and more how to walk this way. It truly is a joy journey.

Blessings and Favor,

**Angelina Graham**

## Hidden Treasure

I remember a few years back having a conversation with a close friend of mine regarding the subject of contentment and joy. We both agreed that contentment was something we both yearned for day in and day out but often struggled to maintain once the winds and the waves of life raged. We had wanted so badly to enjoy the journey, to be found joyful in the midst of tough and uncomfortable situations. All too often we had found ourselves at the finish line exhausted and aggravated with ourselves.

A few years passed before I would begin seeing an answer to the prayers prayed between friends and their Savior that day, a season where joy and contentment became not only a desire for but a need. It started back in 2013 when my husband and I found out that we were pregnant with our sons Ethan and Gabriel. It started with an emergency room visit and spiraled up and down with a few hospital stays and several doctor's visits. Once we thought things had finally settled down, we were admitted to the hospital in our 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester and notified that Ethan's heartbeat could no longer be found. A few hours later Gabriel was born via emergency C-section and passed on to be with our Lord shortly after birth.

I cannot begin to describe the pain that came over me the night the reality hit me that we were not leaving the hospital with our sons. There was this dark hole that appeared that night as I wept. I knew that it was trying to consume me from the inside out and there was this knowing of who it was trying to consume me. That night was the first of many where I would practice the art of joyful praise, the art of allowing Jesus to fill in the empty holes in my broken heart. It was as if I had unlocked this hidden treasure in the most unlikely of situations. A treasure that would remain with me as time passed on.

## True Sacrifice

Shortly after the boys passed on we received news that we were expecting again. Hearing the news of our little girl's coming coupled with a new year just on the horizon meant it was time to step up to the plate. It was finally the time to become not only a hearer of the word but a doer. This desire arose up inside me to seek out my purpose. I am sure many of you can relate to a time when you felt like the different role(s) that you played defined much of who you were as if they were your your identity. For so long I had been the mommy, the homemaker, the wife. This season had to be different.

It was around this time that Psalm 51:16-17 became another key scripture in my life (written by King David, after he heard the news of the coming calamity following the murder of Urriah). What stuck out to me in this passage had nothing to do with what he had done but to his response.

*"The Lord desirest not sacrifice; else I would give it; thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:16-17*

Most people in David's situation would have responded differently but this King was ready to bring his repentant and broken heart to God, the very thing that God wanted. What David came to know as he walked with God was that God was a merciful and gracious God who does not simply require sacrifices and offerings but he wants a heart fully surrendered to him. David had many occasions to experience God's hand of mercy, grace, and favor on his life which was why this passage resonated with me. I too had the opportunity to see what God could do with such a heart so delicate and broken before him; what it felt like to be in the loving hands of a Father, the opportunity to know and trust him more. God requires our hearts because out of our hearts flow the issues of life, blessings and curses, the ability to move mountains, heal the sick, bind up the broken hearted, and give joy in place of despair. We speak out of what is in our hearts and I have learned through David's example in Psalm 51, if I want joy in my life through the ups and downs, I need to surrender my broken heart continually to the Lord.

## The Sheep. Her Shepherd

When our Pastor first challenged our church to spend time each day reading John 15, I was a little aggravated. I had already written it off as “not for me” until my dearest friend pointed out the rebellious spirit surrounding my attitude. Here I was asking God to take my heart and make it new and the first thing he calls me do, I refused.

Today, John 15 is still a passage I go back to almost daily. It has become much like Psalm 51, a stepping stone. The centralized message throughout the chapter is *Abide*. This word *Abide* is all over the Old and New Testament.

*“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John 15:4*

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91:1*

*They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. Psalm 125:1*

*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. John 15:10*

It is so easy to look over the verses in the Bible and see nothing tangible, but there was something about reading this scripture every day, once a day, over the course of 31 days that gave the chapter a head, arms, legs, feet, and finally a heart. The process of this daily reading evolved into this step by step way of living and being-a journey. Abiding went from simply reading a chapter in the Bible once a day out of obligation, turning instead into a study of the scriptures down to context and transliterations. There was a thirst for his word I had never experienced before and needed each day.

After the 31 days in John 15, I was led to meditate on other books of the Bible. I learned in Proverbs 2 that the Lord provided wisdom and understanding to the ones that sought after it. In Psalm 50, God spoke of my daughter Zion and how he would shine forth out of her beauty. In Psalm 91, I learned once again to abide but how in doing so I would dwell under his shelter where there is protection. In Psalm 23, God told me he was my Shepherd and how not one of my needs would go unmet. Psalm 23 to this day often comes to my remembrance, where I learned the person of God in my daily life. I learned what abiding looked like and how I could trust God with each step now that he had my heart and my attention. He became my Shepherd and I his sheep, a sheep that could trust her maker and in doing so would be able to weather each step counting it all joy.



### The Choice

“If you do not leave your comfort zone, your comfort zone will soon leave you.” The thought of being forced away from the people I valued most frightened me. So when I was given the choice to obey God and follow him to another country on missions, needless to say I was too afraid to say no especially after hearing a statement like that on more than 1 occasion.

The choice to move was unexpected but God had already been preparing us. Before losing my sons, I was not in a place in my relationship with the Lord where I could trust him in such a scenario. I would have told anyone that a missionary lifestyle was something I never endeavored to partake in. I enjoyed the comforts of living in the US.

Nevertheless, we sold out to the call of God and though the entire process, I found comfort in the fact that as long as I abided in the Lord, I was under his shadow of protection, right in the palm of his hand. Joyful praise in the midst again became the only way to push through it all with the knowing that no matter what, come what may, we would follow Jesus.

There was 1 point in the process where I found myself faced with a lot of Spiritual opposition. Sorrowful tears would come over me more and more thinking as I thought about all I was giving up until one day I was introduced Elisabeth Elliott. Elisabeth lost her husband to an indigenous tribe in Central America while on missions back in the 1980s. He husband and 4 other men went out to share the Gospel with a local prepared to give up their lives for these men. Jim Elliott and the other gentlemen were in fact killed and Elisabeth went on to complete his work living amongst the tribe for some time. Her story moved me and I began finding myself joyfully praising God with the heart cry of “come what may, I will follow you!” It took me some time to get to that place but I knew that I had a choice to make. I was either going to follow the Lord or not. Joy came once the decision was made and I stopped looking back.

## The Beginning

John 17:3 says *“And this is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”* This has to be one of the best verses in the Bible because therein lies the secret key to everything you have ever yearned for. For me it started with contentment but for you it may be something different. If we would simply put our desires out before him along with our surrendered hearts, seek his face through his word, allow him to do his work, and live it out consistently we will have the desires that he has placed in our hearts but friends just know it is a journey.

This has become my joy journey, for you it could be the peace journey, etc. whatever it is you seek, surrender it to him and watch as he begins this work in your life that will leave you flat on your face in awe of who you find him out to be. I hope this book has been an encouragement to you and will be your springboard into living a John 17:3 life. It has been my honor to share part of my journey. Before we part I would like to pray this over you...

*“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.”* (Jude 24-25)







Weeks 1-4

**Week 1**

**Remain**

*I have loved you [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me]. John 15:9 AMP*

Beloved you were meant to have hope and believe for the things that are unseen. You were meant to be a living example of God's promises on the Earth. Do you understand how exciting that is and what that truly means? Let's look at a few of those promises, shall we...

You are to do even greater things than I(verse)

*Beloved, I wish above all else that they mayest prosper even as thy soul prospers*

*I have come that they may have life and life to the full.*

*Speak to this mountain and it will move(verse)*

*The promises of God are yes and Amen.*

*The prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective*

*I was healed*

I could go on forever but I would not do that to you because that would make for quite a long bible study but just think of it for a moment. What would it look like if each day believers everywhere were living as if every promise in the bible belonged to them? That each word spoken was from God and it was truth?

I am asking you this not to make you feel bad or cause you to think about others in a negative light but because truly, we should be living that way each and every day even in the midst of a broken, sinful World. Now don't get me wrong I am sharing this information with you because there have been days when I have felt nothing like Jesus and still will I am sure but each day I long and strive to live in such a way that I believe each one of God's words in the Bible. It sounds impossible, I know, but that is the most exciting promise in the Bible. The promise that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed and speak to this mountain, it must move (FIND VERSE). Faith is the not seeing but believing piece that brings many to complete

We were meant to walk in contentment and joy each and every day. It is possible. I get it though. I am sure you are wondering how can joy be possible in the day to day mundane, when you can barely make rent or eat for that matter, when you lose someone so dear to you, when a smile hurts. It is in those times when you are being led away from joy by an enemy whose main purpose especially for the life

