

WALKING IN THE LIGHT OF JESUS

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Sometimes life feels a lot like following a recipe from YouTube. We pause, rewind, and try our best to follow every instruction “to the T.” We listen carefully, do what we are told, and expect the end result to look exactly like the picture we were shown. But then life comes out different than we expected.

The instructions seem unclear. Certain steps don’t make sense. Something doesn’t rise the way it should. Something looks messy halfway through. And at the end, what we created may not look anything like what we imagined.

That happened last evening in our home. My wife followed a recipe exactly as it was given. She paid attention, worked hard, and trusted the process. Yet the final result looked nothing like the video promised. But here’s the beautiful part — it was still edible. It was still good. In fact, the outcome was still positive. Oh how I would love you all to see her face when she’s in “her kitchen”, such peaceful joy!

Trusting God’s Plan

When life doesn’t go as we expect, it’s important for us to remember that trusting God’s plan is essential. Even when things change unexpectedly, we find comfort in knowing that God sees the bigger picture. His ways are higher than ours, and we can rely on Him to guide our steps. We often think we have everything figured out, but God’s direction can lead us to places we never imagined. Learning to trust takes time, but it can transform our experience when we face unexpected changes. Instead of losing hope, we can lean into God, asking Him to help us understand His plan as we take one step at a time.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11

Proverbs 19:21

“Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” – Proverbs 19:21

Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28

Finding Peace in Uncertainty

Facing unexpected changes can leave us feeling anxious and uncertain about the future. However, as believers, we can find peace even when things go awry. By focusing on God’s promises, we can cultivate inner calm during storms. The Scriptures remind us to cast our worries on Him and to seek His kingdom first. By doing so, we are assured that God will provide what we need. Holding onto faith

during these times helps us to remain steadfast and calm. Trusting God gives us the strength to overcome any obstacles that we encounter, helping us to remember the power of His presence in our lives.

Philippians 4:6-7

“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

Lessons in Adversity

Sometimes, when things don't go as planned, we are presented with extraordinary opportunities to learn and grow. Adversity often teaches us invaluable lessons, shaping our character and drawing us closer to God. We should embrace challenges and view them as chances to deepen our faith and resilience. Learning from these experiences helps us gain perspective on what truly matters. By seeking God during tough times, we can discover His purpose for our trials and emerge stronger, equipped for our future endeavors. Each setback can be a stepping stone to something greater.

James 1:2-3

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” – James 1:2-3

Romans 5:3-4

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” – Romans 5:3-4

2 Corinthians 4:17

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” – 2 Corinthians 4:17

Gratitude in Disappointment

When our plans don't turn out the way we hoped, it can be easy to feel disappointed. However, choosing to be thankful can drastically change our perspective. Gratitude has a powerful ability to shift our attention away from what's gone wrong. Instead, we can focus on the blessings we still have. The Bible encourages us to give thanks in all circumstances. By cultivating a heart of gratitude, we learn to appreciate the good even when faced with setbacks. It helps us remain hopeful and positive as God works in our lives, leading us to better outcomes than we could imagine.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Philippians 4:11-12

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.” – Philippians 4:11-12

And immediately, I thought about how often God works in our lives that same way. There are seasons where we truly try to obey God. We pray, read Scripture, seek wisdom, and walk faithfully. Yet the outcome still doesn't resemble what we expected. The marriage doesn't look perfect. The ministry unfolds differently. The healing takes longer. The dream changes shape. The path feels unclear. But God never promised that our lives would always look like the “picture” we imagined. He promised His presence in the process.

Isaiah 55:8 reminds us:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. Sometimes we expect God to produce something polished and picture-perfect, but instead He produces something deeper — humility, perseverance, gratitude, dependence, and faith.

The world says if it doesn't look perfect, it must be a failure. But God often works through imperfect outcomes to reveal perfect grace. That meal reminded me that not everything has to look right to still be good.

Some of us are discouraged because life didn't turn out the way we planned. We followed the instructions as best we knew how. We trusted God. Yet things still came out differently than expected. But maybe the Lord is gently reminding us today:

“It may not look like what you thought it would... but I am still working good from it.”

Romans 8:28 still stands true:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Not some things. All things.

Even the unclear instructions. Even the unexpected results. Even the messy middle. Even the outcomes that don't resemble the picture in our minds.

God can still make something good out of it. And sometimes, the greatest testimony is not that everything turned out perfectly — but that God was faithful through it all.

I love my wife's gift and joy of cooking/baking. She does remarkable and enjoyable offerings from the counter to the oven, yet even in the midst; her efforts, adhering to the recipes and time spent, the foods she prepared sometimes doesn't match the journey. Just like our faith walk, it ain't always pretty, even tho we try and follow the Biblical recipes ...our Creator and Holy Chef sustains and prepares us for the sweetest ending, Heaven's Glory. Can't you just taste the Samson honey awaiting us...