

We live in a world that drains joy. Sometimes it happens quickly and other times it drains slowly, without us even realizing it. If you can relate, there's hope. When joy-drainers threaten to empty us out, God can fill us back up. Here's how.

What Do You Do When Life Drains

Your **JOY**?

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My 8-year-old daughter, Sara, is fresh out of her Disney princess stage ... and it's heartbreaking.

I loved that season! I enjoyed watching her excitement as we dined with the princesses in Disney World. I remember watching her wave furiously to Jasmine from the train, yelling with all she had. Sara made it her mission to collect every signature she could during our one-week stay in Florida.

Anything to do with a Disney princess held a special place in her heart. At least it did until some of her classmates began to make fun of her for liking them at her age.

Slowly – almost imperceptibly – the joy she received from them waned. Little by little, the excitement and imagination they used to stir became less and less.

Until it disappeared all together.

Sara isn't the only one who experienced a loss of joy. We live in a world known for its ability to drain joy. People in our lives can drive us nuts. Stress and pressures pull us from our happy places. Sometimes bad news rips away joy and sends us spiraling into fear and disbelief.

- The doctor's office calls with a need for further testing
- Our position at work is being eliminated
- A loved one is in an accident or natural disaster
- We discover a deep betrayal from a spouse or friend

Other times joy slowly drains out of our lives without our even realizing what is happening. It's a slow leak over time and we wake up one morning and discover the joy is gone.

I've been working through the effects of a joy-draining time in my life when people I loved and trusted deeply hurt and betrayed me. One morning I realized just how empty that pain had left me. As I looked back over previous months, I could see how the joy had slowly slipped away.

No single event stole my joy. That would have been too obvious. No, it was a slow leak that eventually left my joy-meter on "E."

... it was a **slow**

by Carey Scott

EVERYDAY LIFE:

In this season of light, we can forget that God still works in the darkness. If your life is feeling dark today, visit www.Proverbs31.org and click on "Everyday Life" to read a fantastic article by Rachelle Rea on what God is doing on your behalf while you are sleeping.

In desperation, I picked up my Bible to look for answers. God took me to a passage that spoke deeply to my thirsty spirit:

"Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers? Unless the Lord had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, 'My foot is slipping,' your love, O Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul." (Psalm 94:16-19)

This passage told me that when we are face-to-face with a joy drainer ... be it a person or a situation ... be it immediate or over time... God will be there to fill us back up.

Psalm 126:3 also reminds us that *"The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."* God is the joy-filler. He alone fills our tank with unlimited joy.

The next time I find myself empty, joyless and sad, I need to recall the great things God has done for me. Not only remember, but also speak them out loud, because the spoken word is powerful. Here is my short list of God's faithfulness to me:

- God restored my marriage when it was on divorce's doorstep.
- God gave me children when we were told we couldn't have them.
- God healed me of a life-threatening disease.
- God provided for us through tough financial times.
- God redeemed a life broken and in shambles.
- God forgave me for MY sins.

When joy-drainers begin to invade my life, God can restore my delight as I revisit all the *"great things"* He has done for me. Because when I do, my joy is restored, and I'm running on a full tank again. 🌸

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everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." God's gifts include:

- the gift of God's love,
- the gift of God's Son,
- and the gift of eternal life.

These precious gifts are given unconditionally. All we need to do is open our arms and accept them with hearts full of faith and gratitude.

Despite the hardships we have endured over the past year, or the hardships we may face in the coming year, I'm counting the reasons I have to celebrate. The world can never take away the gifts I've been given.

If your light feels snuffed today, or if the memories swirling in your thoughts are squelching your Christmas spirit, the One who has overcome the world can help you overcome those feelings.

You can reclaim your Christmas spirit this year by remembering that December is not a time to celebrate the Christmas holiday. It is a time to celebrate Christ, and the blessings found in His intangible gifts.

That, my friend, is a joyous reason to celebrate. 🌸

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