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## A Distant Grief / An Abiding Joy

How to walk and work in joy in hard times

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### A Distant Grief

Years ago, I read a book called *A Distant Grief* by Kefa Sempangi, the founding pastor of the Redeemed Church of Kampala in Uganda. 14,000 members attended in the early 1970s. Kefa's family and church were targets of Idi Amin's brutal regime. By God's grace, they escaped from Uganda, but many did not.

The title of this book, *A Distant Grief*, keeps coming back to my mind. The meaning of the title represents the horror of what was happening just around the corner in this beautiful country. One could be sitting in the most luscious green landscape and hear cries from Amin's brutality in the distance – a distant grief.

This is how I feel these days about our land as I sit in my home with my Bible each morning, my cozy coffee, and every study tool imaginable. The walls are painted whisper green. I've hung banners and hand-made items that remind me of loved ones. The organic herb hill outside my window is a treasure with rocks that line its tiers. I press the herbs and breathe in their healing scents – hints of heaven.

But I know just beyond my property line, atrocities are increasing. You know what they are. I can barely think of them, let alone write about them. What is happening? Will God deliver us; or will Yeshua (Jesus) return for us first on His beautiful white horse in the clouds as Scripture tells us He surely will?

Yeshua was both "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3) and a man of joy. He said to His disciples, "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full." (John 15:11) So, how do I walk in joy considering such evil is happening around the corner?

### An Abiding Joy

The day after writing these thoughts and questions in my journal, my friend Cynthia came to visit to discuss an upcoming retreat. She shared, "When you are at the beach, you have to dive under/into the waves to stay safe from the waves pounding you down. The only way to survive the tidal waves we face is to dive deep into the supernatural depths of Jesus." As we shared, the Lord intercepted our conversation with a startling, clear revelation to me – an answer to my questions. The answer was almost *intrusive* in its sudden *interruption*. I began to weep. I said, "Cynthia, the Lord just answered." She halted and asked the Holy Spirit to come. I said slowly, "The Lord says, 'Be My light in the darkness. Just go be Light.'" The simplicity of this word confirmed its Author.<sup>1</sup>

To walk in joy, I reflect His light. I am light. His light. Joy is the unfailing undercurrent that flows from the deep knowledge of His faithful presence, our eternal life in Him, and His desire and ability to rescue and restore people through His light in us.

The recent words from a lullaby by Kristyn Getty give further instruction to me –

He's here, He's here, whispering in your ear, so keep letting the Light in, keep letting the Light in, keep letting the Light in.

**I let His light in. I soak in His light. I go forth being light.**

*How am I light? By beholding His glory:*

**But we all with unveiled faces looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)**

I am transformed by beholding His glory... by absorbing the light of His Word, by sitting quietly in His presence doing nothing but focusing on Him. Just as being in the sun relaxes my body and nourishes my senses, so surrendering to His light transforms me.

## **The Nehemiah 4:17 Stance**

### **Awareness as We Work in Joy**

During the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in about 444 BC after its fall in 586 BC, there was much opposition to the work. Despite the opposition, the men continued their work while remaining armed against their enemy.

**Those who were rebuilding the wall carried their loads, doing the work with one hand and holding their weapon with the other. (Nehemiah 4:17)**

King David (about 1011 BC) described his mighty men of battle in 2 Chronicles 12 –

Each tribe had specific skills in slinging stones, shooting arrows, handling shield and spear, and swiftly running like gazelles upon the mountains. The sons of Issachar were gifted with the ability to **discern the times so they could understand from the Lord what Israel should do.**

As we do the glorious work of bringing light to the world, we let our minds dwell on **whatever is honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent and worthy of praise<sup>2</sup>**, while remaining aware of what is happening around us and armed<sup>3</sup>, so we are not duped by the enemy's schemes.

**We are at war using the sword of the Spirit<sup>4</sup> and accurate, specific, informed, targeted, revealed, successful prayer and actions directed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup>**

The Lord is the One Who knows how the victory is won. Regarding the evil around us, we pray for discernment to understand what knowledge we need and what knowledge is damaging to our soul. He will guide us all in His light!

**Father, pour Your light through us. Give sight into the unseen so we wisely walk Your path. Increase trust, strength, and joy that wins others as we journey toward our complete redemption and union with You!**

**And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with singing unto Zion; an everlasting joy shall be upon their heads! They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away! (Isaiah 35:10)**

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<sup>1</sup> Please see my writing called *Depth* for more about the revelation of simple truth.

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 4:8

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 6:10-17

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 6:17

<sup>5</sup> For more about God's targeted Word, please see my Scripture Study called *The Master Marksmen*.

I chose the image for this post to show the grief in the distance being overwhelmed by the light in the foreground. The image is part of the **Enduring glory** Art Card from the **Praise Collection** at [FlowerGirlGreetings.com](http://FlowerGirlGreetings.com).