





WE SHALL COME REJOICING BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES



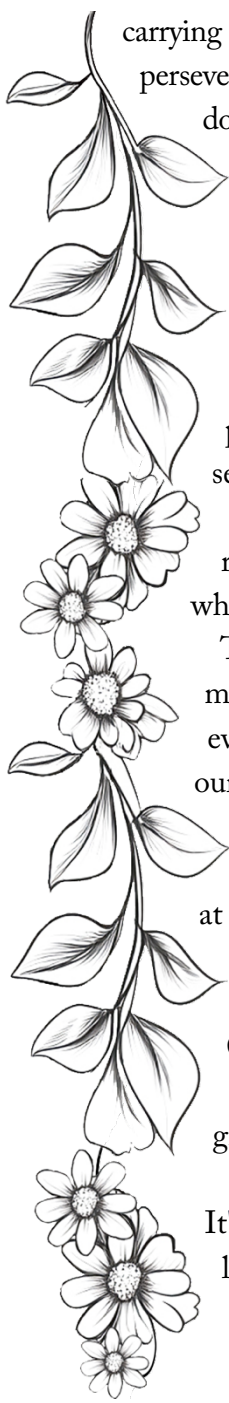
Do you ever feel like you're at the end of your rope? You've done everything you know to do—planted seeds of kindness, read every marriage book on the shelf, prayed countless prayers for your prodigal children, or tried to show love to a difficult co-worker. And yet, nothing seems to change. The marriage remains distant, the children continue to wander, the difficult co-worker is still difficult, and your heart grows weary.

If this is where you find yourself today, you're not alone. Countless women (and men too, for that matter) carry the unseen weight of discouragement, wondering if their efforts have made any difference at all. They've shown grace, served their families, and poured out love with little or no return. After years of one-sided devotion, they question whether there's any point to pressing on.

Psalm 126:6 reminds us of the hope we have in God's promises: 'Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy,

*Those who go out
weeping, carrying seed
to sow, will return with
songs of joy, carrying
sheaves with them.*

—Psalm 126:6



carrying sheaves with them.' This verse paints a beautiful picture of perseverance—a farmer sowing his last bit of seed, tears streaming down his face, all the while trusting that a harvest will come.

Though the season of planting may be painful, it holds the promise of joy when the harvest comes in.

In the same way, your efforts to love, forgive, and show kindness are seeds that God is using to accomplish His purposes. C.S. Lewis once said, 'Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.' Your tears, prayers, and acts of faithfulness are not wasted—they are seeds of hope that God will water in His time. And even in the midst of those struggles, joy can be found—not in the resolution of your problems, but in the presence of the One who walks beside you.

Through times of waiting, seasons of uncertainty, and moments of doubt, Psalm 126:6 encourages us to keep going, even when we're weary. God sees our faithfulness. He hears our prayers. And He promises that our labor is not in vain.

So, how do we press on with joy when weariness sets in? By leaning into His strength and trusting that God is at work, even when you don't see it.

Take heart. The seeds you've planted are not forgotten. Keep showing up. Keep loving. Keep praying. And let God take it from there. When the harvest comes—and it will—you'll see that every act of kindness, every moment of grace, and every prayer whispered in faith was worth it.

Remember, dear friend, joy isn't the absence of hardship. It's the presence of God in the midst of it. He sees you, He loves you, and He is with you every step of the way.



LET'S MAP IT OUT

Seed represents work, effort, or faith planted in hope of a future harvest.

Sheaves are bundles of harvested grain—a symbol of the results of hard work and faith.

Those who go out weeping,

To leave in sorrow, facing hardship or loss.

carrying seed to sow,

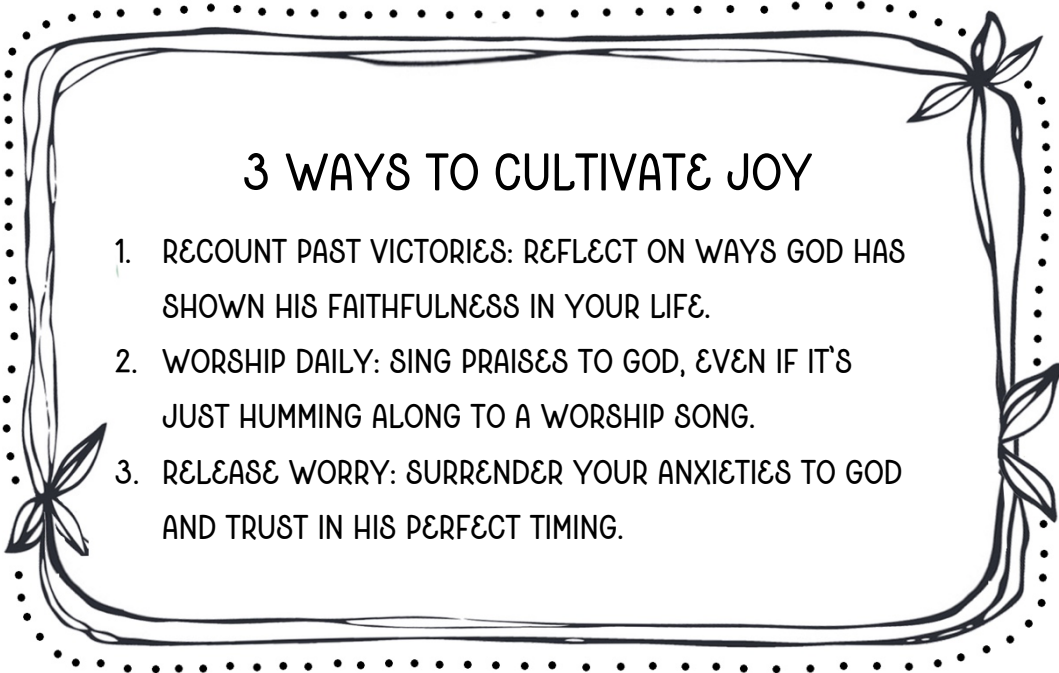
will return with songs of joy

To come back with a heart full of joy and celebration.

carrying sheaves with them.

Psalm 126:6, NIV

This verse beautifully captures the journey from sorrow to joy.



3 WAYS TO CULTIVATE JOY

1. RECOUNT PAST VICTORIES: REFLECT ON WAYS GOD HAS SHOWN HIS FAITHFULNESS IN YOUR LIFE.
2. WORSHIP DAILY: SING PRAISES TO GOD, EVEN IF IT'S JUST HUMMING ALONG TO A WORSHIP SONG.
3. RELEASE WORRY: SURRENDER YOUR ANXIETIES TO GOD AND TRUST IN HIS PERFECT TIMING.

GOD ISN'T FINISHED WITH YOU YET

The story of the Israelites in Babylonian captivity teaches us about perseverance. They had lost everything — their homes, their freedom, and their hope. Yet, even in exile, they held on to God's promises, trusting that He would restore them in His time.

SOWING IN FAITH

In captivity, the Israelites sowed seeds of faith through prayer, repentance, and obedience, even when their future seemed uncertain. They persevered, believing that God would fulfill His promises. Their story shows us that every act of faithfulness matters, even when we don't see immediate results.

WAITING IN HOPE

Waiting can be painful, but like the Israelites who endured seventy years of captivity, we are called to trust in God's faithfulness. The waiting season is never wasted. God is always at work behind the scenes, preparing a harvest we cannot yet see.

REAPING WITH JOY

Just as God restored the fortunes of the Israelites, He will complete the work He started in us. The harvest may not come right away, but every act of love and faith will be worth it.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

—PHILIPPIANS 1:6

More Food for Thought...

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will
reap a harvest if we do not give up.

– Galatians 6:9



Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle,
for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that,
or whether both will do equally well.

– Ecclesiastes 11:6



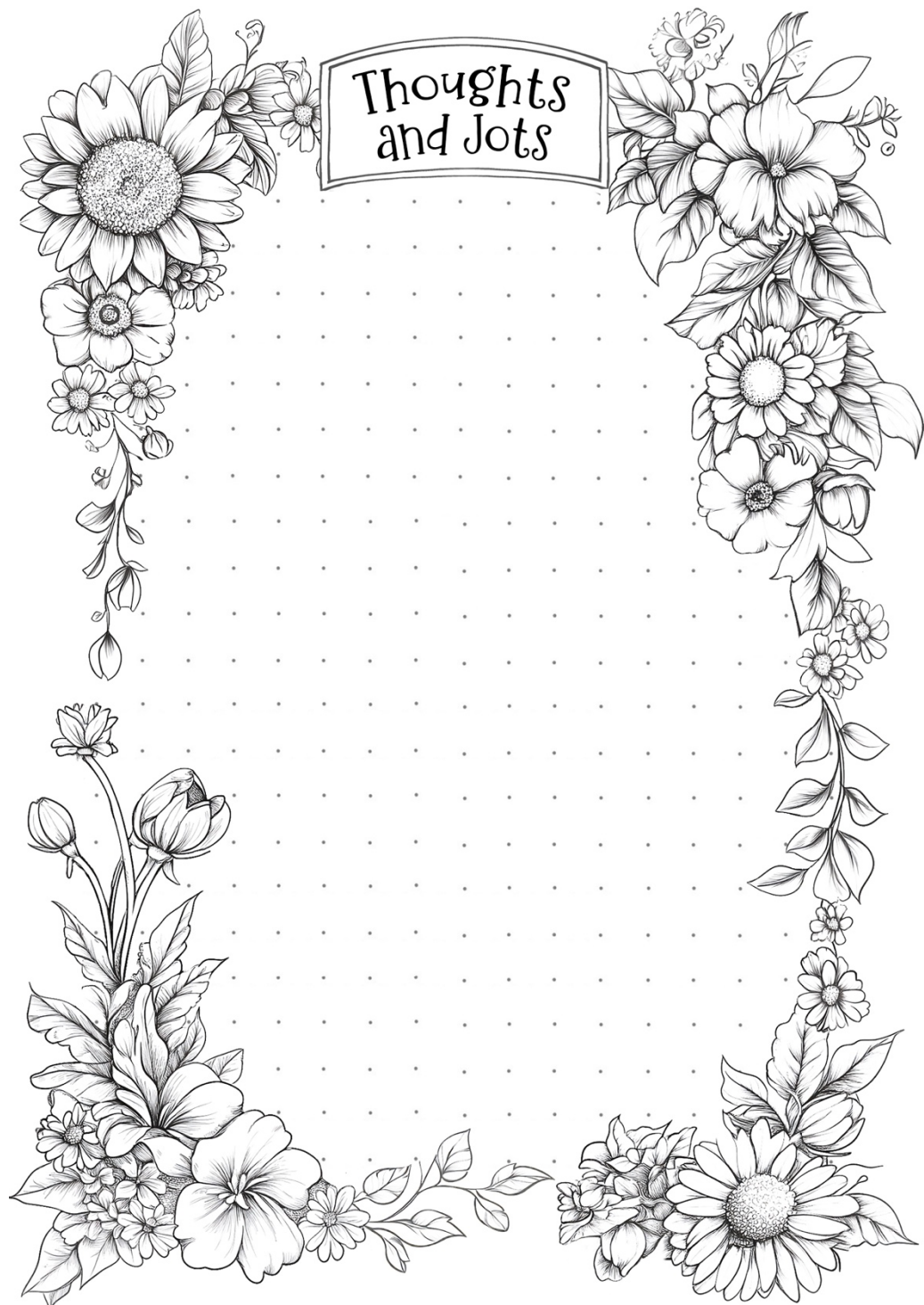
Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always
excel in the work of the Lord, because you know that your
labor in the Lord is not in vain.

– 1 Corinthians 15:58



Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and
whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

– 2 Corinthians 9:6







THE CHOICE TO BE BETTER NOT BITTER

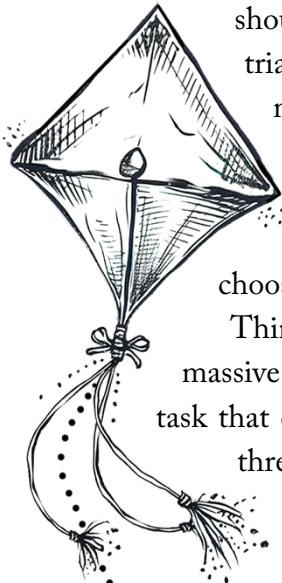
What is it about pouting that comes so naturally to us? Whether we're stuck in traffic, dealing with a harsh comment, or frustrated by plans falling through, we find ourselves giving in to the pull of the pout. We retreat into ourselves, fold our arms, and let the root of bitterness grow. But what if these moments of frustration are opportunities for something greater?

*All the days of the
oppressed are
wretched, but the
cheerful heart has a
continual feast.*

—Proverbs 15:15

You've probably heard the story of Jonah and the big fish, but have you ever paid attention to his attitude after that? When God showed mercy to the people of Nineveh, Jonah wasn't exactly thrilled. Instead of rejoicing over their repentance, he sat down for a pity party of one. And it didn't stop there. In the final chapter of his story, Jonah found himself sitting outside the city, sulking over a withered plant. It's almost comical when you think about it—a grown man throwing a tantrum because his shade disappeared.

I'll admit, I see a bit of Jonah in myself. It's easy to let frustration get the better of us. We all have those moments when we say something we



shouldn't, only to regret it later. But here's the thing about trials—they aren't meant to break us or make our lives miserable. They're designed to test our faith, to show us where we stand and give us a chance to grow. As Proverbs 15:15 says, "All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast." When we choose joy, even in hard times, it changes everything.

Think about Nehemiah for a moment. He faced adversity on a massive scale. God called him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, a task that came with relentless opposition and discouragement. The threats were so bad that the Bible tells us the men worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other to defend themselves. Yet despite the challenges, Nehemiah chose to trust in God's plan and keep working. He didn't let bitterness or self-pity take root. Instead, he pressed on, and through that perseverance, he found joy in walking faithfully with God.

Trials do one of two things: they make us bitter, or they make us better. It's up to us to decide which one it will be. Jonah had the scorching winds and the withered plant to contend with. Nehemiah had opposition, exhaustion, and constant threats. One chose to grumble through adversity, while the other grew through it.

Choosing well isn't easy. It often comes when we're tired, irritated, or simply not in the mood to take the higher road. But I'll tell you something—the higher road leads to joy. It's the road that helps you sleep at night, the one that mends relationships and preserves peace. It's the road that reminds us of the blessings we have, even when life feels less than ideal.

We can either lean into God, using our trials as opportunities to grow through adversity, or we can choose to let adversity embitter us. There's something beautifully resilient, deeply faithful, and remarkably hopeful in the choice to be better, not bitter.

READ AND REFLECT

Read Jonah 4. What does Jonah's reaction to the plant reveal about where he placed his happiness?

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Can you think of a time when your joy depended on something temporary—like your plans going smoothly or having things go your way? What difference do we see when our joy is rooted in God's unchanging character rather than in temporary comforts?

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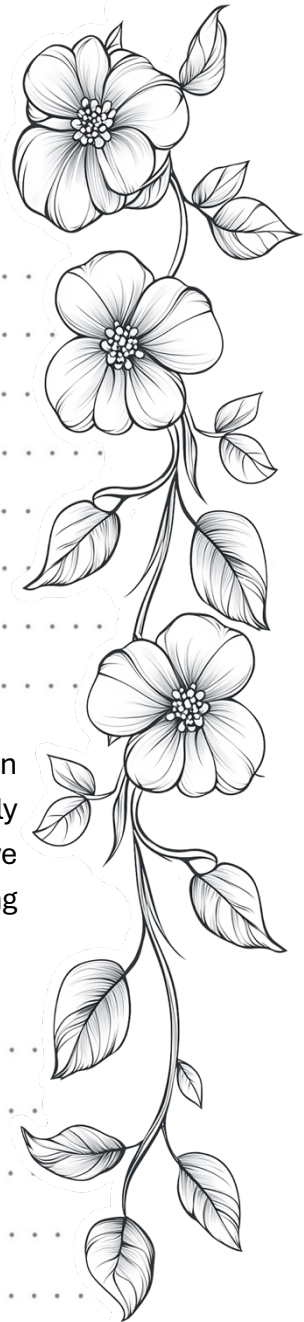
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JOY IN GIVING

Use the space below to list three things you can do to bring someone else joy this week.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





LET'S MAP IT OUT

Describes misery and suffering, whether due to external circumstances or internal struggles.

All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

Proverbs 15:15, NIV

Refers to those burdened by troubles, hardships, or a negative outlook.

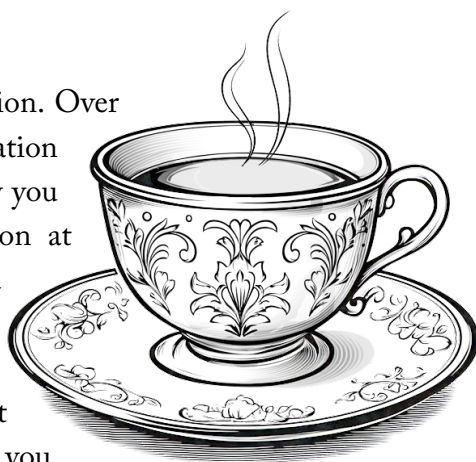
Symbolizes ongoing satisfaction, joy, and abundance, not tied to material wealth but to an attitude of the heart.

A joyful and contented spirit that remains positive despite circumstances.

While external trials may persist, our internal perspective — shaped by faith — has the power to bring lasting contentment and peace.

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Let's put this powerful principle into action. Over the next few days, try to identify one situation or event where you have a choice in how you respond. It could be a stressful situation at home, a challenging interaction with a co-worker, a personal setback, or even a global event that affects you.



Take a moment to pause and reflect before responding. Recognize the choice you have in that moment: will you let it make you bitter or better? If you feel yourself starting to react in a negative way, try to shift your perspective and choose the path of growth instead.



YOU'RE NOT IN THIS ALONE

Adopting a good attitude isn't always easy, but the good news is that we're not in this alone. It's a decision we make, yes—but it's not the whole story. The moment we take that first step toward forgiveness, healing, or simply letting go of bitterness, we're inviting the Holy Spirit to work within us. He equips us with the strength we need to move forward. Philippians 2:13 reminds us that "God works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." You don't have to muster up joy or patience on your own; the Holy Spirit produces that fruit in your life (Galatians 5:22-23). When bitterness knocks on your door, remember you're not alone. Ask God for help. He is faithful to give you the grace and strength to rise above the hurt, transforming your heart and renewing your mind as you lean on Him.



More Food for Thought...

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

– Proverbs 17:22



Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.

– Ecclesiastes 9:7



But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

– Psalm 68:3



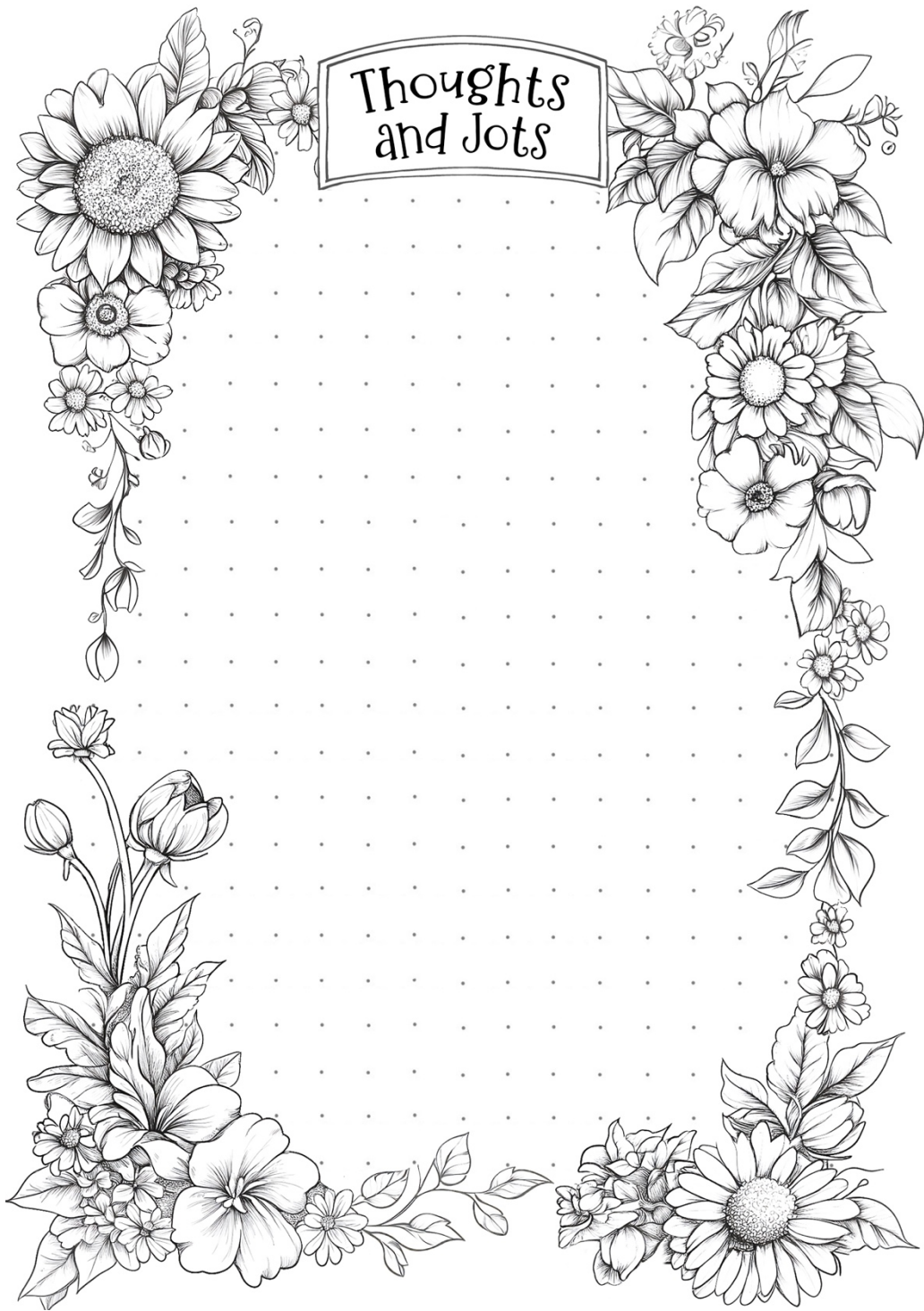
In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.

– Philippians 1:4



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







CREATE SPACE FOR GOD



I don't know about you, but I tend to get distracted easily. I can be working on something important, and the next thing I know, I'm scrolling through my phone or staring out the window at someone walking past the house. Distractions seem to pop up everywhere—the internet, phone notifications, random thoughts about dinner. Before I know it, the day has slipped away, and I'm left wondering where my time went.

Some nights, I find myself looking back at the day and asking, *Why didn't I use my time more wisely? Why do I keep getting pulled into these time-wasting traps?*

It's easy to get so caught up in the busyness of life that we miss out on the beauty and joy that surrounds us. We get too busy to notice the changing colors of the leaves or the way the sun filters through the trees. We rush from one task to the next, hardly pausing to take a breath—let alone to spend time with God.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

—Matthew. 6:21

We get so distracted by the search for joy that we don't realize it's already surrounding us. Joy isn't found in a perfect life, free from challenges. It's discovered in the quiet moments when we pause to recognize God's goodness in the midst of it all. It's that quiet assurance that, even when life feels overwhelming, His love remains constant. God's faithfulness gives us reason to smile, to take a breath, and to be grateful—even when the road is rough.

There's a reason Jesus told His disciples to "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31, NIV). He knew the importance of slowing down, of stepping away from the noise and distractions to reconnect with the Father. But if we're honest, how often do we do that?

Many of us live life "flying by the seat of our pants," reacting to whatever comes our way instead of intentionally planning time for what truly matters. The expression comes from early pilots who, when their instruments failed, had to rely on their instincts to guide the plane—not exactly the safest way to fly. And it's not the best way to live, either.

If we want to live with purpose, we need to set our compass. That means deciding what's truly important and making sure our lives reflect those priorities. If we only pray when we feel like it, we miss out on the times we need it most. If we only read the Bible when it's convenient, we're likely to push it aside when life gets busy.

The truth is, we need to create space for God in our lives—not as an afterthought, but as a priority. It might mean saying no to certain distractions or carving out time each morning to sit quietly with the Lord. It might mean looking up from our phones to appreciate the beauty of His creation or pausing to thank Him for the simple joys in life.

When we set our compass toward Him, we find the peace and joy we've been too busy to notice. Because where our treasure is, there our heart will be also (Matthew 6:21). Let's make sure our hearts are aligned with the One who brings true joy.

... Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. —Mark 6:31 ...



TODAY I'M THANKFUL FOR

Use the space below to list three things that you're thankful for.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



3 WAYS TO CULTIVATE JOY

1. CELEBRATE GOD'S CREATION: ADMIRE THE BEAUTY OF A SUNRISE, FLOWERS, OR EVEN THE STARS.
2. MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE: HIDE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART TO DRAW ON IN MOMENTS OF DIFFICULTY.
3. SERVE OTHERS IN HIS NAME: JOY GROWS WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS SELFLESSLY.

LET'S MAP IT OUT

*Indicates certainty.
Your heart will
definitely follow
what you treasure;
it's not a possibility,
but a reality.*

For where your treasure
is, there your heart

*A storehouse of
valuable things;
something precious,
indicating what
we value most
in life.*

will be also.

*Represents the core of a person's
thoughts, desires, and affections.
It refers to what we prioritize
and love.*

*If we treasure material
wealth, worldly success,
or temporary pleasures,
our hearts will be consumed
by them. But if we focus on God's
Kingdom, our hearts will be transformed
to align with His purposes.*

Matthew 6:21, NIV

More Food for Thought...

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things
will be given to you as well.

– Matthew 6:33



Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

– Psalm 37:4



Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

– Matthew 11:28



Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and
joy are in His dwelling place.

–1 Chronicles 16:27

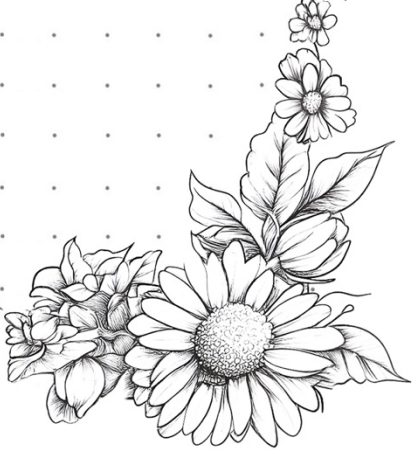
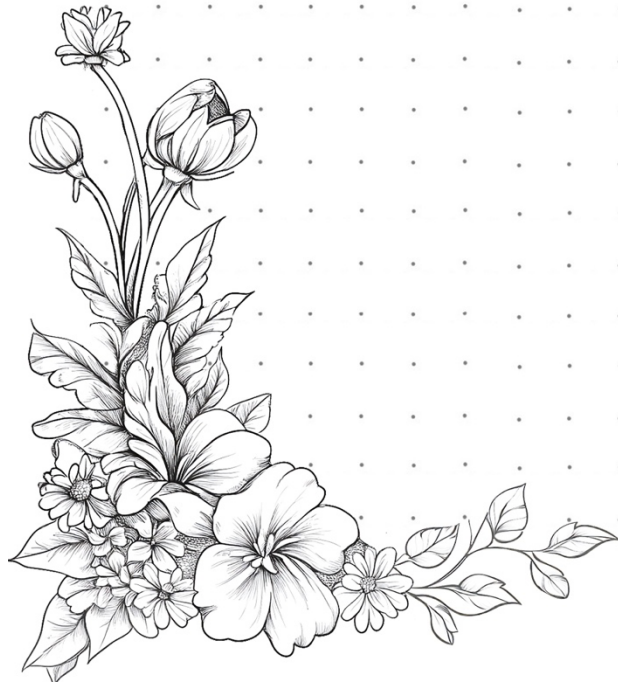


One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the
house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.

–Psalm 27:4



Thoughts
and Jots



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