

# Maintaining our Joy amid our Negative World

- By Rafiat A. Anokwuru (PhD.)

## Is it possible to be joyful amidst the current pandemic of Covid-19?

This disease has not only affected our physical state but also threatened our social being. We, as humans, can no longer move around freely (to curb the spread of the virus).

The social distancing is shutting down global economies, causing a surge in

unemployment in every country. This has resulted in fear caused by uncertainty in our hearts. We ask, "What will happen to my children?" "Will I be able to feed them?" "Will I still have a job after the lockdown?" There is also the fear of food insecurity that may result directly from Covid-19 and other related incidences. For instance, Kenya and Zimbabwe's food security is highly compromised by the locust plague and by drought,

respectively.

Suffice to say that these are legitimate fears that can keep us from being joyful. Yet God commands us to rejoice always in Him (Philippians 4:4). Why would God demand us to rejoice amid our negative world? One answer to this question is that it is because He knows our make-up, He created us, and He understands the relationship between our mental (mind) and physical

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cannot reach us easily.

A psychiatrist, Dr Rachell Rohaidy, once said "our mind cannot be detached from our bodies". Once we experience stressors that we cannot deal with mentally, our bodies transform them into physical symptoms that can manifest as headaches, palpitations, chest tightness, colds, inability to sleep (insomnia), and body aches, to mention a few. As a result, God does not want us to stress and live in fear because He wants our soul to prosper even as our health prospers (3 John 2).

The Scripture says "A joyful heart is a good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength". (Proverbs 17:22). Scientists have also proven that when your mind is happy, your brain secretes more serotonin and dopamine, which are happy hormones. These hormones produce positive effects in our brains, blood circulations and immune systems and our bodies become more alert to fight illnesses (Leggs, 2018; Park, Peterson, Scvarca, Vander Molen & Collin, 2014).

God also desires a joyful state in our Christian journey because it creates positive mental alertness in an environment which God can get through to us. He speaks to our mind, but once our mind is clogged with sadness, He

How then can we be always joyful when we are emotional beings that react sadly to our depressing surroundings? As far as we understand, even God is not emotionless. He is touched by the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). He also said there is a way of escape for every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13) which includes the temptation to hide away in our sadness. He has highlighted ways in which we can remain joyful in our wicked and sad world.

### **Here are three steps to maintain joy amid negativity:**

1. We must always dwell in the fullness of God's presence as alluded to by the Psalmist in Psalm 16:11- "You will show me the path of life; In your Presence is fullness of joy; At your right hand are pleasures forevermore". This we can achieve through Bible study and all manners of prayer.
2. We must trust in God completely. We trust in God because we are guaranteed that He holds our future in his hands. Jeremiah 29:11 assures us that He is leading us to an expected end. So even if the world is crashing around us, we can trust God enough that "He has got our back."
3. Lastly, we must turn our eyes

on Jesus and not on the circumstances around us. Psalm 16:8-9: "I keep my eyes always on the Lord, with Him at my right hand I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices, my body also will rest secure."

Abiding in God during this pandemic will help us to maintain joy amid our negative world.

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