

## FINDING JOY IN DARK DAYS

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*That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Luke 2:8 NLT*

*How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? Psalm 13:2 NLT*

*Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Psalm 23:4 NLT*

## Success does not \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ from dark days

*Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. 1 Kings 19:3-12 NLT*

**Darkness is \_\_\_\_\_ of God**

**It's not as \_\_\_\_\_ it is**

**You're not alone \_\_\_\_\_  
you're alone**

**Refusing to give up is a form of**

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*Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! Luke 2:9-11 NLT*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Luke 2:13,14 NKJV*

*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. Isaiah 9:2 NLT*

## **QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS //**

- *Read this definition of JOY: the quiet confidence that ultimately everything will turn out right (in this life or the next) because God is over this, He is in this, and He will work through this (whatever "this" is). What sticks out to you?*
- *When is a time in life you experienced dark days?*
- *What was (or would've been) helpful in that season?*
- *Read Isaiah 9:2. How does this reality change how we encounter dark days?*
- *Read Luke 2:8-15. What can the shepherd teach us about joy in the midst of darkness?*
- *Lift one another up in prayer!*