



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

Thankful for the peace of God

Her dad died when she was five. Her mother died when she was in high school. She went to live with her grandparents. They weren't in good health. It was hard for them to be involved. So it was easy for her to lose her way.

She had boyfriends who only wanted her for the wrong thing. It was hard to make friends moving to a new high school. And she didn't know how to deal with the emotional loss of her parents.

She got into drugs and dangerous partying. She ended up pregnant, and the dad bolted. Working two jobs and raising a little girl of her own, she didn't know how everything ended up so wrong.

We often don't know why things happen the way that they do. But no matter where we are, no matter how much we might be hurting, God never leaves us.

That young lady is now in her 50's. She is remarried to a wonderful man. They have a couple more kids as well. When asked what got her through those tough years she said, "When I realized that God wasn't out to get me but was going to bring me through this no matter what... that's when my faith deepened."

Trusting in God's rule is difficult when things are going poorly. When school is difficult, and friends are unkind. When tragedy happens or when we lose someone we love. Even though it looks like God isn't near or in control, that doesn't mean that's true. In these moments, Jesus longs to draw us closer to himself.

You see that when the disciples were stuck in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Terrified they asked, "Don't you care?" And Jesus got up and stilled the storm. When they were hiding behind locked doors afraid of being killed like Jesus for following him, Jesus appeared and said, "Peace be with you." Only our Savior who calms storms and rises from the dead can give us a peace that goes far beyond what we think and feel. In fact, God doesn't ask us to understand his control. He doesn't ask us to always feel good about it. He simply points our eyes to facts: "Your sins were paid for on the cross. Death, sin, and the devil can't harm you because the tomb is empty."

God's peace in these promises will guard your hearts and minds.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to appreciate your presence. You are my perfect, heavenly Father who never leaves me. Lead me to appreciate your love and your guidance especially when my thoughts and feelings try to tell me otherwise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.