

Letting

Go...

## of THE FAIRYTALE

*“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.”*

—1 Peter 4:12

### **Once upon a time... they all lived happily ever after!**

Have you ever imagined a perfect life, free of problems and difficulties? Or perhaps you imagine that the people around should understand your every thought and emotion and always say the right thing...

Think about a movie. We watch with great anticipation just waiting for it all turn out right with the perfect ending —wishing for the happy ever after ending in our own lives—longing for the Fairytale! We dream about the perfect everything: perfect lives, perfect family, perfect job, perfect car, perfect body, perfect house, and the list goes on.

We are consumed with the idea of the “happy ever after.” But God never promised us a fairytale life. Rather, we are guaranteed trials and hardships. As 2 Timothy 3:12 explains: “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” Jesus knew our life would not be a picturesque fairytale, yet He wanted to give us hope and let us know that in Him we can have His peace amidst the reality of life. Jesus says in John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

He has overcome the world and He wants us to live life wholeheartedly for Him. As we surrender our expectations of the perfect life and yield to His plan we can experience the liberating freedom of letting go!

### **A letting go moment – “SO”**

*Matthew 5:11-12 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

**1 Peter 1:6-7** “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to \_\_\_\_\_ grief in all kinds of \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved \_\_\_\_\_ and may \_\_\_\_\_ in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

**1 Peter 4:12-13** “Dear friends, do \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something \_\_\_\_\_ were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But \_\_\_\_\_ that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be \_\_\_\_\_ when his glory is revealed.”

**1 Thessalonians 3:2-4** “We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, <sup>3</sup>so that no one would be unsettled by these \_\_\_\_\_. You know quite well that we were \_\_\_\_\_ for them. <sup>4</sup>In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.”

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** “We are hard pressed on every side, but NOT \_\_\_\_\_; perplexed, but NOT in \_\_\_\_\_; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but NOT \_\_\_\_\_; struck down, but NOT \_\_\_\_\_.”

**James 1:2-3** “Consider it pure \_\_\_\_\_, my brothers, whenever you face \_\_\_\_\_ of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.”

**Habakkuk 3:17-19** “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup>yet I will \_\_\_\_\_ in the LORD, I will be \_\_\_\_\_ in God my Savior. <sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD is my \_\_\_\_\_; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.”

**Philippians 4:12** "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have \_\_\_\_\_ the secret of being \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."

**As we read earlier, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 that we will face hard times. But not to the breaking point because Jesus has overcome the world and He will never leave us to walk this journey alone (Deut. 31:6). What comfort do you find from this realization?**

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*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

*—Deuteronomy 31:6*

As we think about the stories in the Bible... the people God uses to teach us lessons didn't have the fairytale life either. Let's look at some of these characters.

**Joseph (Genesis 37-50):** His own brothers stripped him, threw him in a deep pit, and sold him as a slave. Along his journey, Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and then thrown into prison...later God raised him up and used all the trials for good. When Joseph was reunited with his brothers he showed them kindness and forgiveness; his response to them: *"<sup>20</sup>You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."* (Genesis 50:20)

**Job:** *"The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me."* (Job 30:27) Job lost everything! His barns, his crops, his children! Yet, he still praised God. He was plagued and tormented with awful sores all over his body! Yet, he still praised God: *"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."* (Job 1:21b)

**The Disciples:** History tells us that all the disciples were persecuted and even martyred for staying true to their faith. They were beaten, stoned, crucified, speared, beheaded and hung. (John was the only one to die of old age, but that was after miraculously living after being put into a cauldron of boiling oil... he then was banished to the Isle of Patmos where he wrote Revelation and died).

**Jesus:** *“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup>We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. <sup>9</sup>He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup>Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.”* (Isaiah 53:3-10)

**Jeremiah:** Let's go a little deeper with Jeremiah. What about the following verse? *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11)

## **Wrap up:**

I must let go of my idea of the \_\_\_\_\_ and learn to \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Passage Index** (NIV 1984 unless otherwise stated)

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