

An old Gaelic prayer ...

*O Holy One, as the hand is made for holding
and the eye for seeing,
You have fashioned me for joy.
Share with me, then, the vision
which shall find that joy everywhere:
in the wild violet's beauty;
in the lark's melody;
in the face of a steadfast person;
in a child's smile;
in a parent's love;
in the purity of Jesus. Amen.*



*How Can The Joy of the
Lord Be My Strength? ?*



Be joyful at your Feast--you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God...

Deuteronomy 16:13-17

Ways to Overcome

Obstacle: *They were mocked. Called “feeble Jews” and told the wall was so weak that a fox could break it down.*

Response: *Prayer*

Obstacle: *Their enemies threatened to attack them.*

Response: *They prayed and set a guard.*

Ways to Overcome

Obstacle: *The Jews were giving into fatigue and fear:*

Response: *Guards were placed at the lowest points. They were allowed to rest and Nehemiah preached to them to remember the Lord and fight for your family.*

Ways to Overcome

Obstacle: Greed was causing the rich to take advantage of the poor, causing their children to become slaves.

Response: After hearing this Nehemiah was filled with righteous anger, then he took time to ponder and he gave an exhortation “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our

Gentile enemies?” Nehemiah then called them to give back all the money and property that they had unfairly taken from the poor. They called the priests and had a service where they made promises to put this into action and the rich did give back what they had taken.

Obstacle: Four times their enemies tried to get Nehemiah to go to Ono to attack him

Response: Four times he said “Ono” I can’t go, I am carrying on a great work.

Obstacle: Their enemies sent out a public letter filled with lies.

Response: Nehemiah declared they were lies and prayed for God to strengthen his hands.

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Response: *Nehemiah declared they were lies and prayed for God to strengthen his hands.*

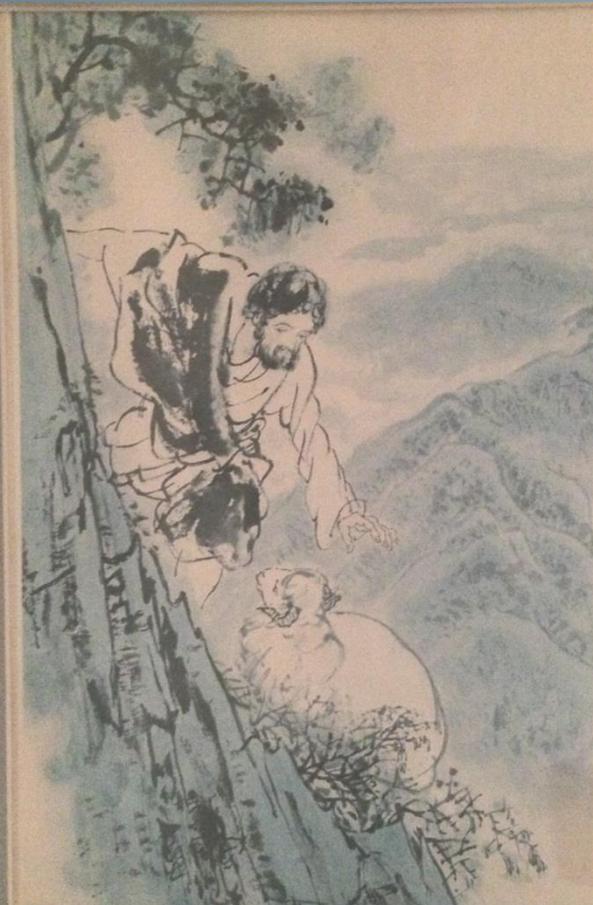
Obstacle: *Their enemies bribed prophets to prophesize against Nehemiah and the building of the wall.*

Response: *The Lord enabled Nehemiah to know the prophesying was not from God and to pray.*

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9

And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.. Luke 15:5-7





But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.



What I love about David is that, through the Psalms especially, we see he was able to find joy in the Lord when he was in a pit of loss, anguish, and depression. David was also able to find joy in the Lord when victories and miraculous answers to prayer abounded. David's joy overflowed out of his heart for the Lord. Circumstances didn't dictate his joy or his faith in God.



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Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

(James 1:2-4)