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## Encouragement for Today

Principle #1

### “It Came to Pass”

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#### Key Verse:

1 Peter 5:10, “And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” (NIV)

#### Devotion:

One of my favorite book introductions reads, “And it came to pass...” It’s the famous introduction in the story of Sleeping Beauty and several other beloved tales. It’s a familiar beginning to something we know will be filled with intrigue – ups and downs, twists and turns, good and evil, suspense and delight.

Often the story starts out pleasant. All the characters are at peace with one another and the world around them. But something happens in the middle of the story that stirs the waters of tragedy, suspense ensues as it looks like all hope is lost. Any smart writer knows an audience desires the dangerous intrigue, but equally desires an ending where all good things will be restored once again. But to know for sure what will happen, we must finish reading, right?

I believe God, the Author of our lives, loves to keep us interested as well. His ultimate desire is to bring total victory and restoration. And the best part is that He’s already given us the end of the story to prove it!

Everything comes....to pass. Everything begins....to end. Everything happens...to conclude at some point. I don’t know about you, but when my life story reaches a climactic point of difficulty, I NEED to know that my troubles will eventually end. I need to believe that the things that have been lost or broken will once again be mended back together and restored the way God intended for them to be. As today’s Key Verse suggests, we only suffer for a time before God does this. Let me offer a few examples of the kinds of restoration offered to us when we’re walking through a difficult time:

*Daily restoration:* Psalm 30:5, “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

*Short-term restoration:* Matthew 17:22b-23a, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.”

*Long-term restoration:* Genesis 21:6-7, “Sarah said, ‘God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.’ And she added, ‘Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.’”

*Eternal restoration:* Isaiah 29:18, “In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.”

So what do we do while God, the Author, is writing His next chapter for us?

His greatest desire is that we come to Him desperate and yielded in prayer. By praying, we tell God we believe He can make anything possible. We also draw from the fruit of joy, born out of the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives. Joy is a spiritual attitude that is supernatural, exceeding our natural capacity to deal with the many trials we encounter along the way. At times we must make a choice to look at our story with the spiritual eyes of joy. Joy brings hope – “And hope does not disappoint us.”

One of my favorite sayings is, “Hindsight is 20/20.” Oh, how our spiritual vision is so much clearer when we look back at the difficult times that have come...and gone.

So what happens when the story of our lives is hanging in limbo where it looks like evil has conquered our circumstances? Allow your spiritual eyes to look ahead to the end of the story God has written in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation. This ending is defined by victory over evil and complete restoration of things as they were meant to be. Then, rejoice today that you are promised a hope for tomorrow and the many tomorrows that may have to come and go before all is well again.

**My Prayer for Today:**

Lord, help me to see beyond today’s struggle. You are the Author of a true fairy tale because the ending is happy and victory over evil has already taken place. Help me not to get stuck in the middle of my own story, but to trust that my difficult time will eventually pass into the light of restoration. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

**Application Steps:**

Grab a notebook, pen and your Bible concordance/dictionary. Take some time to create your own personal study by looking up the Scripture references for each recording of these three words: pray, hope, and joy.

1. Read the context each Scripture is set in and write what you think it says in your own words.
2. Do you see any parallels between the different references of prayer? Of hope? Of joy?

3. Journal a current (or recent) situation in which you simply can't seem to see past the fog of today's troubles.
4. Based on what you have read and recorded about prayer, hope, and joy, how can you apply God's Word to your situation?

**Reflection Points:**

Go back and re-read the four different kinds of restoration God brings us. Is there one that fits your present situation?

How does it make you feel to know that as a believer, your story does not end in despair?

Consider doing a study on the end of the story – the book of Revelation.

**Power Verses:**

Psalm 30:11, "You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy." (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time." (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." (NIV)

Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (NIV)

**Additional Resources:**

*What Happens When Women Walk in Faith*; by Lysa TerKeurst  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_whatHappens.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm)

*Tips on Overcoming Worry in the Uncertainties of Life*, ETC Corner  
<http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/etcApr04.htm>

*Secrets of the Vine* by Bruce Wilkerson  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_secretsVine.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_secretsVine.htm)