**Count it Joy**

*Trusting and Surrendering to God’s Plan*

James 1:2-4 in the NLT says

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

There was a time in my life where I had turned away from God. I identified in depression and anxiety and operated from a place of shame and fear. I was so unsuccessful in handling adversity that rock bottom became something like a comfort zone. I had a victim mindset and I had a disgust and distrust for the Bible. In my last visit to rock bottom, homeless, single mother pregnant with my second child, fleeing a violent relationship. It was the lowest I had ever felt in my life and that was also the first time in a long time that I had called on God. I began to pray again. And I began to show my oldest to pray. Instead of dwelling in bitterness, I decided “Enough! This cycle breaks NOW.” And I knew I had a choice to make. To have a victim mindset, or to count it joy. I chose to have hope in the future. I chose to call on God again. I chose joy.

Reasons to count every battle joyful and how to stay hopeful

1. It strengthens our ability to stand against adversity. It strengthens our ability to resist defeat.

- The enemy wants us to feel defeat and have a distrust for God. And when we resist him he has no choice but to flee. And in remaining faithful, in the trusting in the plan he has for us, in the praising through the storm, the enemy is put to shame. The enemy has no authority. His assignment is canceled.

So In that pit I prayed for God to give me the endurance that I needed to make it a practice to tell myself that I was worthy, and that no amount of darkness that followed me could compare to the greatness that I was about to receive.

1. It puts us in a position to be promoted to the next challenge.

-God doesn’t give us what we can’t handle. His plan is as the scriptures say, in Jeremiah 29:11 “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give a future and a hope”.

When I choose to trust that whatever i was going through was part of his perfect plan to a prosper me, when I used the power of prayer and sought his face, his voice, I became stronger. In choosing to praise through the trial, I became fortified.

So I’ll end with this. We count it all joy in the trial and the warfare because we know that he is finishing what he started… a great work in us.