

FINDING JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD



Take Time to Brew Coffee!

by Carole Leathem

Finding Joy in the Presence of God

How do you find joy when your life is such a mess? “I take time every day to brew my coffee” is my go-to answer when someone asks that question. I admit that knowing a good cup of coffee is waiting for me in the kitchen is the only thing that gets me out of bed some mornings.



*I'm on a journey to find joy when life doesn't go as planned,
and it starts every day with brewing my coffee.*



In our “I want it now” society, we have created all kinds of methods for getting to our first cup of coffee in the morning fast. A selling point for most coffee makers is how quickly they will get your cup filled. I have become a pour-over girl. The process of brewing my coffee every morning is a reset for me and goes like this:

- Boil the water to the optimal temperature
- Grind the beans to the perfect consistency
- Place the grounds in the pour-over funnel
- Slowly add the water, swirling around the edges
- Wait

It takes time and patience for me to get to that first delicious sip. You're probably asking yourself this question right about now, “How does brewing your morning coffee lead to finding joy in the presence of God?” I'm glad you asked!

In 2016 my life fell apart. My husband, a pastor for over 30 years, had a breakdown. He began to struggle with anxiety and depression. When suicidal thoughts joined in, he had to retire early, and our lives changed completely. We sold the house we loved, downsized, and moved into a small apartment attached to my daughter's house. I lost my identity as a wife, a pastor's wife, and my relationship with friends and my children changed.

It took two years, but in 2018, at 4 am, standing at my kitchen counter, putting a pod into my coffee pot, I finally said the words out loud, “My husband struggles with mental illness.” When the words left my lips, tears began to trickle down my cheeks, and I heard God say to me, “I know, my sweet girl, come out into the garden and sit with me.”



*Yes, God talks to me. I'm never sure if it's an audible voice anyone else can hear,
but I hear His voice all the time.*



My thoughts turned to a favorite scripture in Isaiah 30:21. I knew what I needed to do, so I grabbed my cup of coffee and bible that morning and walked out into my garden.



*"And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"
when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."*

Isaiah 30:21 (CSB)



As I sat sipping my coffee and listening to the sounds of the world waking up, I asked God, "What happened to my life?" His answer was, "You stopped asking for my help and started taking control!" God's words surprised me because I felt like it was my job to find answers for everything related to my husband's survival. I had to keep him safe, figure out his medications, and most of all, protect him. I began listing out loud all the things I was now responsible for, telling God, "How can you say that I stopped asking for your help?" I went on to list for God that morning all the things I now did for him. I read my bible every morning, I taught bible studies and life groups every week, and I told everyone how He kept showing up in miraculous ways to take care of us.

God's answer was, "You're so busy doing and trying to fix everything. My sweet girl, you have started telling me all you're doing or going to do for me and have stopped asking me what I want you to do. What I want is for you to have coffee and sit with me, focus on me and listen."



I had started telling God everything I was going to do for Him and had stopped Him asking for directions.



I told God, "I'm going to need another cup of coffee to process this new information." God's response, "Start with the coffee! I want you to dig your electric kettle, pour over funnel and coffee beans out of the cabinet. Slow down and take the time to brew your coffee." As I stood waiting for the water to boil, my conversation with God continued. He gently reminded me that if I am too busy to brew my coffee, then I'm probably just going through the motions in every other way, including my daily time with Him." As I picked up the steaming cup and walked back outside, I felt relaxed, as I anticipated spending the next few moments with God.

I have come to cherish my morning ritual of brewing coffee and talking to God. As my schedule has gotten busier, I now have a travel setup complete with a foldable electric kettle and pour-over funnel that goes with me everywhere. Why? As I brew my coffee each morning, no matter where in the world I happen to be, I am preparing my heart for my daily coffee date with God.



Carole Leathem was a Hollywood commercial actress and pastor's wife. When her husband developed anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, Carole began sharing the chaos and messiness that comes with caring for someone with a mental illness.



Through her ministry, Carole's Journey, she encourages and uplifts hundreds of women all over the country with her flair for storytelling and raw transparency. Carole and her husband, Bill, live in Bakersfield, California, and are parents to two grown miracle children and grandparents to seven grandchildren.

Little known facts:

I'm a true introvert who resets with a cup of good coffee, a warm blanket, and my Bengal cat purring on my lap. I have motion sickness so bad; I can't swim and take medicine so I can go on rides at Disney parks with my kids and grandchildren. I'm obsessed with British Television. I put mustard on everything...even pancakes.



Must find coffee -

Is that how you feel in the morning? I feel like that every morning.

How about must find God?

How do I start? I'm glad you asked!

Find your favorite mug, fill it with your favorite coffee or tea.

Turn the page and begin.

I will be praying for you.

(((((((HUGS)))))))))

Carole



Coffee with Jesus

Begin by:

- Finding your spot, outside if possible, and sit comfortably for a few moments with your arms in your lap and your hand's palms up.
- Listen to your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, releasing them slowly.
- Spend a few minutes looking around you. What do you see? What do you feel?
- Ask God to speak to you. When your mind wanders, refocus asking God to speak.
- When He speaks, write it down.

Read through the scripture verses below two times:

“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.”

John 3:16 -17 (The Message)

Below the verses are broken down by phrases. Read each one responding as directed:

This is how much God loved the world:

Look around you at the world He created. How can you see His love in creation?

He gave His Son, His one and only Son.

Imagine God as a father, sending his son, Jesus as a baby to the world. Jesus is growing into a young boy, then as a man caring for people. Imagine Jesus nailed to the cross. Dying and his body placed in a tomb (cave).

And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed: by believing in Him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

Imagine an empty cross. Jesus is walking out of the tomb (cave) alive. Jesus is greeting his friends who had watched him die.

God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.

Is your image of Jesus pointing his finger at people, telling them how bad they are? Imagine instead that Jesus is standing with His arms open wide.



Knowing *about* God is different from KNOWING GOD!

We know *about* God means we:

- know the Bible
- know right from wrong,
- know God's ways.

We KNOW GOD when we make it personal. Let's do that now!

Insert your name in the blanks below:

This is how much God loved _____.

He gave his Son, his one and only Son for _____.

And this is why: so that _____ need not be destroyed;

by believing in him, _____ can have a whole and lasting life.

God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling _____ how bad she was.

He came to help, to put _____'s world right again.

Reread the verses without stopping using your name.

Close your eyes and imagine Jesus is standing before you with His arms open wide. Reread the verses saying your name and stopping after each line, listening for God to speak.

Is God speaking to you? What is He saying? Write down His words.

Finish with a prayer. Talk to God.

***God, I have wondered where you are. I have asked you questions,
"Do you care? Can I trust you? Are you aware of what's going on in my life?"
I see now that the answers are, "YES!" What you wanted was a relationship with me.
I love that you are waiting every morning for me to get my coffee and spend time with you.
I thank you for loving me, for sending Jesus. I love you too!
See you tomorrow.***

