

HAPPINESS BEYOND FEELINGS



YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH LIFE BASING YOUR HAPPINESS, YOUR REACTIONS, YOUR WORLDVIEW, OR YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS ON FEELINGS. FEELINGS CAN BE FICKLE. THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE, "FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."¹ EVEN THOUGH YOUR BODY MIGHT GROW TIRED OR YOUR SPIRIT WEARY, YOU CAN KNOW AND HAVE FAITH IN GOD THAT HE WILL CARRY YOU BEYOND THE THINGS YOU IMMEDIATELY SEE AND FEEL.

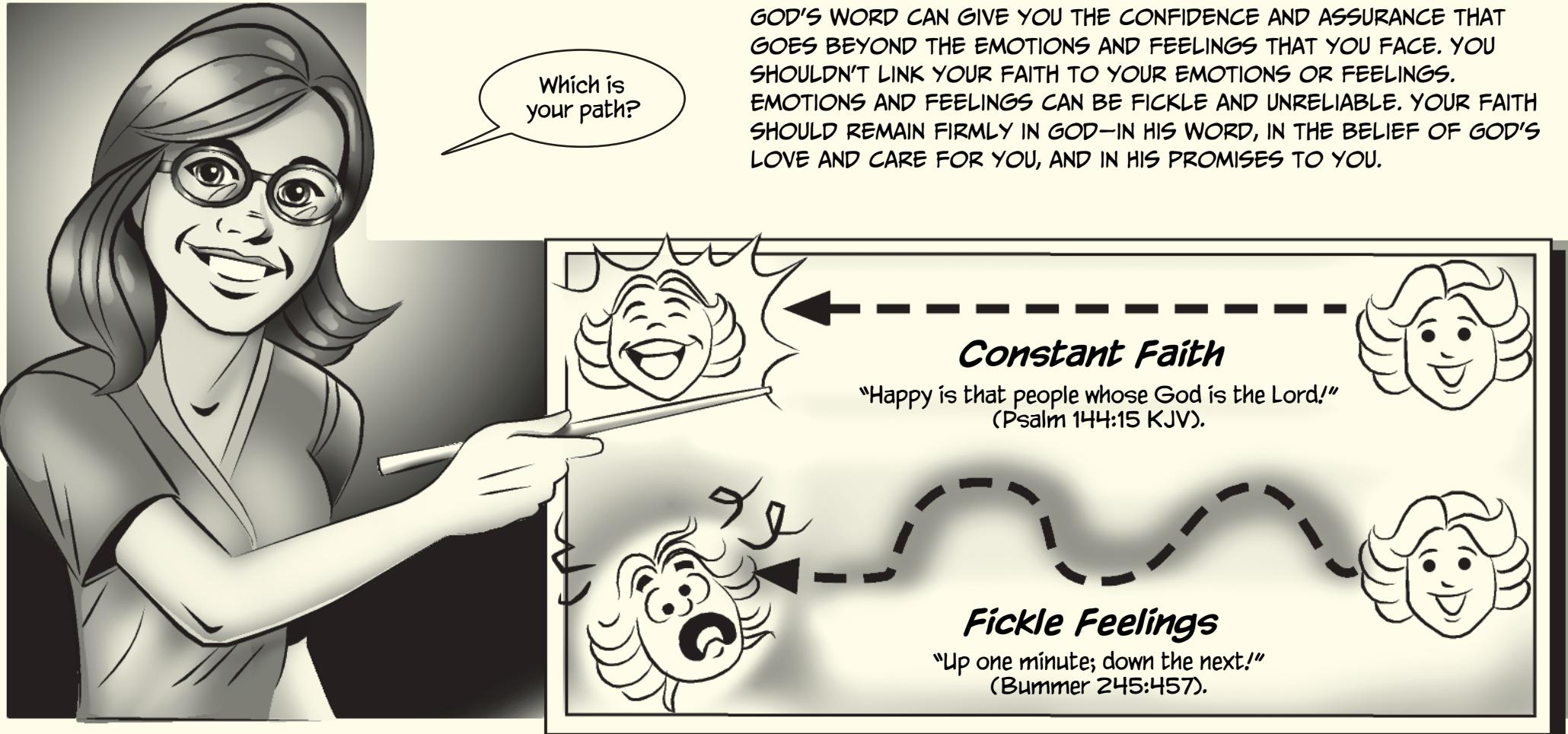
FAITH IN GOD IS THE FOUNDATION THAT KEEPS YOUR SPIRIT ANCHORED NO MATTER WHAT OBSTACLES OR DIFFICULTIES YOU FACE. FEELINGS—IN THE FORM OF EMOTIONS, MOODS, SADNESS, FEAR—CAN IMPACT YOU, AND, IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THEY WILL SLOWLY STEAL JOY FROM YOUR HEART. THIS IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR FAITH BUILT SECURELY IN YOUR BELIEF IN GOD, IN HIS WORD, AND IN THE ASSURANCE OF HIS LOVE FOR YOU.

YOU ARE GOING TO FACE DIFFICULT TIMES IN LIFE—EXPERIENCES THAT FRUSTRATE YOU, MAKE YOU SAD, BRING HEARTACHE, OR THAT CHALLENGE YOU. IT CAN BE HARD TO SEE BEYOND THE MOMENT TO HOW THOSE DIFFICULTIES ARE GOING TO AFFECT YOUR LIFE. IF YOUR REACTION TO A CHALLENGE IS BASED PURELY ON YOUR FEELINGS, THEN YOU WILL BE A BIT LIKE A SHIP TOSSED ABOUT ON A TURBULENT OCEAN. EVERY WAVE (YOUR FEELINGS) WILL LEAVE YOUR BOAT (YOUR LIFE) ROCKING CONTINUALLY THIS WAY AND THAT.



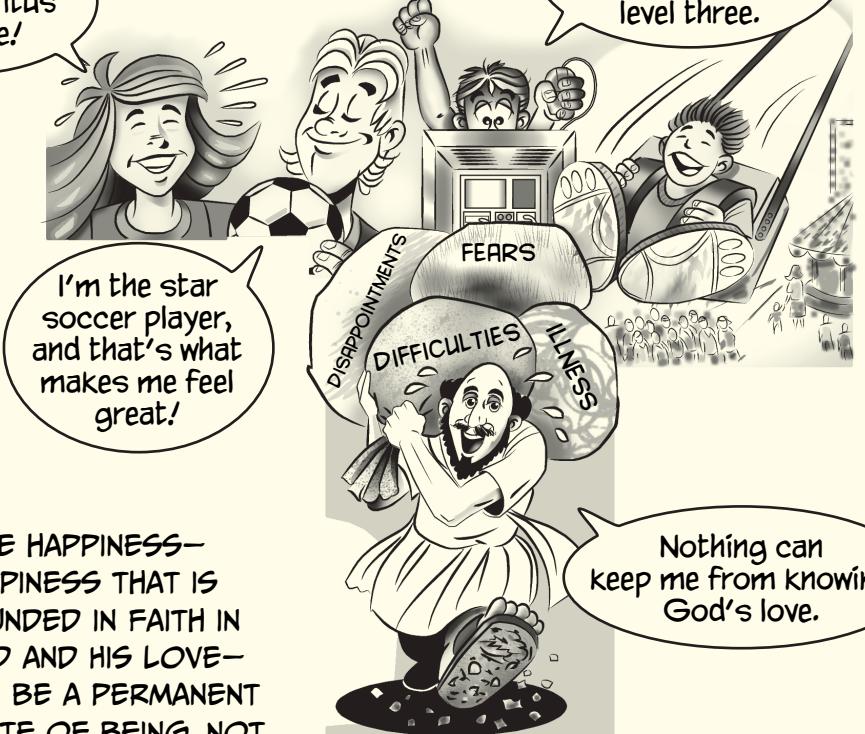
JAMES 1:2-4 SAYS, "WHEN TROUBLES OF ANY KIND COME YOUR WAY, CONSIDER IT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GREAT JOY. FOR YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOUR FAITH IS TESTED, YOUR ENDURANCE HAS A CHANCE TO GROW. SO, LET IT GROW, FOR WHEN YOUR ENDURANCE IS FULLY DEVELOPED, YOU WILL BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, NEEDING NOTHING."²

"GREAT JOY" MIGHT NOT BE YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTION WHEN FACED WITH TROUBLES. THE JOY TALKED ABOUT IN THIS VERSE IS NOT THE FEELING OF EUPHORIA OR ELATION, BUT RATHER THE JOY AND CONFIDENCE THAT COMES FROM KNOWING THAT GOD IS THERE TO CARE FOR YOU. IT IS JOY THAT COMES FROM FAITH—"THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE PROOF OF THINGS NOT SEEN."³



YOU CAN BE HAPPY BECAUSE YOU KNOW GOD'S LOVE IS ALL-ENCOMPASSING. YOU HAVE HIS WORD AS A FOUNDATION TO KEEP YOU STEADFAST DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE YOU FROM GOD'S LOVE. NOTHING NOW, NOTHING IN THE FUTURE, NO POWERS, NOTHING ABOVE YOU OR NOTHING BELOW YOU—NOTHING IN THE WHOLE WORLD—WILL EVER BE ABLE TO SEPARATE YOU FROM THE LOVE OF GOD THAT YOU FIND IN JESUS.⁴

TRUE HAPPINESS—
HAPPINESS THAT IS
FOUNDED IN FAITH IN
GOD AND HIS LOVE—
CAN BE A PERMANENT
STATE OF BEING, NOT
MERELY A FEELING.



TRUE HAPPINESS IS THE PEACE, CONTENTMENT, AND JOY THAT REMAINS.

"SO BE TRULY GLAD. THERE IS WONDERFUL JOY AHEAD, EVEN THOUGH YOU MUST ENDURE MANY TRIALS FOR A LITTLE WHILE. THESE TRIALS WILL SHOW THAT YOUR FAITH IS GENUINE. IT IS BEING TESTED AS FIRE TESTS AND PURIFIES GOLD—THOUGH YOUR FAITH IS FAR MORE PRECIOUS THAN MERE GOLD. SO WHEN YOUR FAITH REMAINS STRONG THROUGH MANY TRIALS, IT WILL BRING YOU MUCH PRAISE AND GLORY AND HONOR ON THE DAY WHEN JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED TO THE WHOLE WORLD" (1 PETER 1:6-7 NLT).

Footnotes:

¹2 Corinthians 5:7

²James 1:2-4 NLT

³Hebrews 11:1 WEB

⁴See Romans 8:38-39.

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