

date: 9.28.14

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan

Sitting among a group of graduate education students, we were asked to name something with which we had struggled learning over the years. Most named subjects like math or chemistry. When it was my turn to speak, I answered, “learning to find joy in the midst of a trial.” It was July 2014.

Adopting two boys from foster care has been one of the most difficult things I have ever done because it has brought some tough trials. At times, I’ve been tempted to “check out” emotionally because it’s just too hard. Don’t misunderstand, there have been many blessings, but the struggles have been difficult on me, my marriage, and my family.

On the way home Sunday, one of our adopted sons had a “meltdown” in the car. Although these now come less frequently, this one was really bad. Without going into all the ugly details, the result was that this crisis gave us the opportunity to talk to both boys about God’s grace. We were able to share how much God loves us, even when we’re acting unlovable. I think our older son was finally able to believe in our unconditional love for him and his brother. Tears came from both mom and son, and I was able to get a hug from a teenage boy who hates to be touched or show affection. In the midst of a trial, God gave us a grace moment. It was really beautiful.

Earlier this year I met an adoptive mom who has adult children and adopted kids in elementary school. During our first get together, she was describing some of the trials she had, and then concluded by saying, “I’m not going to let Satan steal my joy!” Knowing that Satan’s desire is to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10), I was drawn to her determination and jealous to own that perspective.

Have I learned to find joy in the midst of a trial? Not always – but I want to. Do I like the pain that comes with a trial? Absolutely not. But I no longer pray that God would just fix the situation and end the struggle so quickly. When something happens, I talk to Him first – before calling my sister or husband. I ask Him to teach me something through it. Having trials helps me see my need for a wise Father. I am learning to proclaim “I’m not going to let Satan steal my joy!” and then trust that He will use the situation for good.

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Do we love God even when He is allowing us to struggle in a trial? How do we show it?

Verses mentioned in the message: John 10:10, James 1:2-12