

4 Ways to Cancel Your Pity Party

Resource: Today's Christian Woman

I'm a lousy mother," A woman thought one morning after a heated discussion with her 16 year-old daughter over a certain video's appropriateness. By lunchtime, she had replayed the conflict a dozen times. By mid-afternoon, her pity party was full blown: "My kids deserve better." Nobody loves me. Everybody hates me. I'm gonna run away.

Most of us throw a pity party at least once in our lifetime. Sometimes it begins when a relationship crumbles. Sometimes it starts when we compare our assets, appearance, or abilities to others' and feel inadequate or less fortunate.

Before long, joy dissipates like helium from a balloon, and Bible reading and prayer become a drudgery. Personal relationships suffer. Is this how God wants His daughters to live? Not a chance.

Instead, His plans for us include joy and peace. Not "giddy giggles" when things go well; but genuine joy that bubbles from the soul and crashes pity parties before they get rolling.

The Old Testament contains a story about a man who had every reason to throw a pity party, but he refused to do so. His account proves it's possible to cancel the party before it begins.

The Ultimate Party Pooper

Meet Job, the greatest pity-party pooper of all time. Scripture describes him as blameless



and upright. He feared God, shunned evil, and bore a reputation as the greatest man among all the people of the East (Job 1:1, 3). But one day, circumstances soured — he lost oxen, donkeys, sheep, servants, camels, and worst of all, his ten children.

Job grieved, as would any normal person facing unspeakable loss. But his attitude set him apart. As life caved in, he fell on his face in worship and said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:20, 21). Is that amazing, or what?

Like Job, we can rise above self-pity, no matter what our situation. When we're tempted to throw a pity party, we can use these four points to check our perspective:

Focus On God's Word

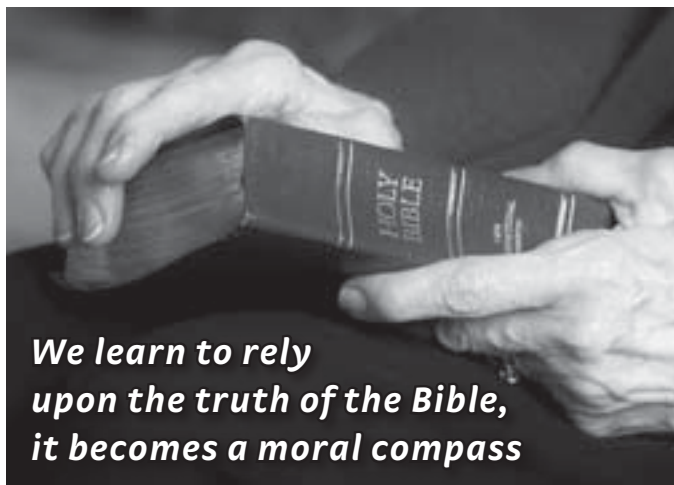
Circumstances change, but God's Word remains

the same. Its truths overcome worry and fear — two culprits responsible for pity parties.

In 1989, 30-year-old Jan Turner was her church's music minister. She also taught music and fifth grade at a Christian school and was a single mom raising two adopted boys, ages four and ten.

Then pneumococcal pneumonia invaded Jan's body. Within hours she slipped into a coma and for two weeks hovered between life and death. Due to lack of circulation, her limbs were amputated. Jan had to learn how to walk, eat, dress, drive, and cook using prosthetics.

Throughout her ordeal, Jan clung to Romans 8:28-39. She reminded herself nothing could separate her from God's love, and in Him, she was more than a conqueror.



We learn to rely upon the truth of the Bible, it becomes a moral compass

Today, Jan, 44, is an ordained minister, part-time radio announcer, and substitute teacher at a local high school. When she shares her testimony, she tells listeners, "Gaze at the promises, glance at the problems. God will always see us through." What an inspiration this can be to all of us!

Focus On God's Character

When Betty moved to another city, she hoped to buy a particular house surrounded by lush greenery, much like her former location. That didn't happen. The house she eventually purchased faced desert-like scenery, and homesickness set in.

Losing sight of God's character, she focused on her circumstances. Life lost its joy. Disappointment overwhelmed her. She expressed her frustration to anyone willing to listen.

Nine months after Betty's move, a forest fire consumed nearly every house in the neighborhood where she'd hoped to buy. Suddenly she realized that a merciful, all-wise God had been working on her behalf all the while.

"I acted like a child stomping my foot and saying, 'I want to live there and I don't want the answer to be no,'" admits Betty in retrospect. "But God graphically showed me how He protected me from my wants."

Betty discovered that focusing on circumstances yields discouragement, anger, and bitterness. But focusing on God's character, even when we don't understand or necessarily like His ways, builds confidence, joy, and

peace. Focus on Him, who can and will as He sees fit, supply all our needs!

Focus On Obedience

In her book 'A Heart Like His', author Rebecca Manley Pippert writes, "As we learn to rely upon the truth of the Bible, it becomes a moral

compass in a confusing, unstable, and often scary world. Scripture not only guides us into orthodoxy (right thinking), but also into ortho-praxis (right living). Our obedience to God's Word will keep us steady in the worst of times."

But sometimes it's easier to throw a pity party than to obey commands in Scripture such as "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Many of us have been there.

After high-school graduation, Stephanie, made plans to attend college nearly 1,000 miles from home. Rather than put her on a plane, her mother chose to drive her to school, hoping to create a lasting mother-daughter memory. She created a memory alright, but not the kind



she had hoped for. The car's transmission blew before they left town! They drove home in a loaner car, sporting a \$3,600 repair bill.

Sleep evaded that mother all night as she stewed over the unwelcome turn of events. "Poor me. Things never work out the way I want. You hung me out to dry this time, God." All the while, a familiar Scripture kept running through her mind: "Give thanks in all circumstances." She tried ignoring it, to no use. Giving thanks was the last thing she felt like doing, but she knew it was right.

When she finally confessed her disobedience and began thanking God for His control over the situation, peace replaced frustration and contentment replaced self-pity. Let Him be our Guide in life's journey!

Focus On Others' Need

"Discouragement tends to stop us from carrying others' burdens", writes author David Jeremiah in 'Slaying the Giants in Your Life'. "It sends us inward, where pity parties are common and perspective is rare. How often I've forgotten my own little worries when I've been busy calling on someone who was sick, or making rounds at the hospital. Going

Ditch Self-Pity

Celebrate life with these activities instead:

- List ten things for which you are thankful
- Take a walk and pray for others along the way
- Serve at a soup kitchen
- Fill your home with upbeat worship music or hymns
- Sip a cup of herbal tea and read a book
- Open the drapes and let the sunshine flood your home
- Watch a funny movie with someone

in, I've told God that I had nothing to give these people; coming out, I've felt abundantly blessed." For years, an elderly woman cared for her grown daughter, who had a crippling disease. Then the woman lost her husband to cancer. On the morning after she had buried her spouse, she looked beyond her needs and phoned an elderly friend to check on her well-being.

We need to look beyond our own problems and bear others' burdens through prayer and practical aid. Does a single mom need a

break? you can baby-sit. Does a less fortunate family need food? You can offer resources. Personal pity parties lose their appeal when you focus on others' needs. Look around you, someone may be needing you!

Pity parties negatively impact our relationship with God, impair our interactions with others, and cause us to become self-absorbed.

Instead of having a pity party a much better way is to spend our time celebrating God's faithfulness, love, and control over our lives.

18 Ways To *Lift Your Spirit*

Resource: "Endearing Elegance" Canterbury North West Division, New Zealand

Realise we all have such days for whatever reason and it's what we choose to do with them that enables us to mentor others and adds that 'endearing elegance' to our own lives.

- Call a friend, a shut-in, someone known to you who is unwell.
- Go out to your garden and pick fresh flowers for your home.
- Take fresh flowers from your garden or buy some flowers and take to someone else.
- Be naughty and eat something rich, fattening and delicious.
- Put on your favourite CD and dance and sing to your hearts content.
- Give someone a compliment.
- Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee in your best china.
- Do something that you have been putting off for ages.
- Buy a new plant and add it to your garden.



- Make yourself laugh aloud. Think of something funny to get yourself started.
- Simplify your life and make it less stressful.
- Forgive someone who has hurt you.
- Watch your thoughts, don't entertain negative or ungodly thoughts.
- Be good to yourself today & take care of your body.
- Go somewhere special to you and spend time with God.
- Pray for your friends and family.
- Don't ask God for anything today, thank Him for everything.
- Do something fun with a friend.