

A piece of cake?

From start to finish the Bible is filled with details of the sufferings and trials and mistakes of God's people. The Christian life is definitely not a "piece of cake!" So why does the Bible say, in Nehemiah 8.10, "The joy of the Lord is your strength"?

This is not a contradiction. For the trials of this life, God provides something far stronger than aspirin! – something no one else can provide – the joy of the Lord. Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16.33 (NIV)

In other words, God's comfort is greater than any trouble this world can bring upon us!

The apostle Paul agrees. Speaking of "conflicts on the outside, fears within," he says: "In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds." 2 Corinthians 7.4-5 (NIV).

Does that seem incredible? The explanation is that when God takes up residence in the lives of Christ's disciples, his positive influence is irrepressible. "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4.7 (NIV)

Unexplainable? Yes, but real just the same. No wonder Christianity appeals so strongly to the poor, the weak, and the downtrodden.

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GOOD NEWS IN BRIEF

Jesus warns us to expect painful experiences, personal trials and setbacks. He wants us to welcome them as friends – as opportunities for our faith to grow.

Ken Packer