

THE VALLEY OF ENDURANCE

Once there was a farmer named Patience, he lived in a fertile valley called Endurance. In this valley of Endurance he grew the most precious crop found anywhere on earth called Joy.

This crop of Joy that Mr. Patience grew was rare, and very precious and extremely hard to grow because sometimes the crop would take a year to mature, that is, produce its fruits.

And that is why everyone called Mr. Patience, well, Mr. Patience and the valley he worked in Endurance. However, there also was a more abundant crop, but inferior to the crop Joy. Most people grew this crop with little or no effort and it was called Fun. But the fruits from this crop Fun when eaten only lasted a few minutes then the person would go away feeling empty and sometimes craving the fruits of Fun even more!

The place this crop of Fun grew was called the Great Valley Everywhere because the crop simply grew, well everywhere – with little effort or care. In fact, the time or seasons did not matter much either; night or day the fruits of Fun were always there.

But as for the wonderful crop Joy one could hardly find it, it could only be found in the small valley of Endurance and hardly anyone knew it existed. You see, in order to see the valley of Endurance a person must have a special pair of glasses that allowed a person to see into the invisible world.

And without these very special glasses a person could stumble upon the field of Joy and not realize it. However, they would get to feeling so good they run back to the valley of Everywhere to have more Fun. Not ever knowing where the Joy came from.

You see my friend, the fruits of Joy are so very precious and rare they are invisible to the human eye so without the special glasses a person could receive Joy and miss its whole purpose, and sadly never experience it again.

However, Mr. Patience has many pairs of the special glasses because he loved sharing his Joy with others. And as you might expect he was always eager to loan a pair of his special glasses to a passerby. One day, a young man happens upon Mr. Patience's field of Joy as he was making his way through another valley called Life.

This young mans name was Empty of Heart because he had spent his whole life living in the Valley of Everywhere eating the fruits from the crop Fun. Mr. Patience joyfully greeted him:

“Are you lost son?” Empty of Heart replies: “Yes sirs, ah, wow! I’ve never felt so good and peaceful, where am I?”

Mr. Patience smiled and then said: “You are in my field Joy – in the Valley of Endurance.”

Empty of Heart then replies: “I don’t see a thing!” “Yes, said Mr. Patience, I know; you see friend the crop I grow is invisible to the human eye; you’ll need a special pair of my glasses in order to see my labors.” As he handed the young man Empty of Heart a pair of his glasses.

But Empty of Heart looked a little scared, he said: “Why don’t you have a pair of these special glasses on?” Mr. Patience replied, “simple my friend, I don’t need them it is my field of Joy; if you were to grow your own field of Joy then you wouldn’t need a pair either.”

Now Empty of Heart put the glasses on and for a moment he was struck with awe! He simply could not say a word. “Its, its, beautiful, I can’t believe my eyes; like a field of precious sparkling diamonds; the soil is pure gold.”

Mr. Empty of Heart, heart fill with joy at seeing this awesome sight: “I’ve never experience such a feeling in all my life, such joy. Please Mr. Patience can I have some of the fruits of your crop to take with me, I will be happy to pay for it?”

“Well said Mr. Patience the price of my crop of Joy is too precious to place a value on. But I’ll be more then happy to give you some of my Joy to take with you; so then you can start your own crop and that way you can have Joy forever.”

“Yes, yes,” said Empty of Heart, I want to grow my own crop of Joy!”

“Ok said Mr. Patience, but first I must show you the hidden secret to my success. Follow me and I’ll show you the precious tools of my trade.”

Mr. Patience then led him to an old barn that he called The Lamp of the Body, and there inside of the old barn were a number of bags full of something. And there were all sizes of buckets for hauling the contents into the field.

“Notice, said Mr. Patience, each of these bags were marked with its precious contents; these are the ingredient to make the field of Joy grow. However, each ingredient must be mixed carefully.”

Mr. Empty of Heart looked at the first bag and its contents was marked Goodness, and the next bag was marked Kindness, and still another Love, then there was Faithfulness, Humility, Self-control and so on...

Mr. Empty of Heart said: “Where did these come from?” Mr. Patience said: “Well, I grew each crop in the bags over the years, then I saved the fruits by a processing machine called Putting the Fruits to Work; then I stored them in the bags here. So anytime I have a disease that attacks my crop of Joy I come here and find the right ingredient and put on the field to heal it.”

“Well, said Mr. Empty of Heart, sounds like a lot of work to me.” “Yes, it is my friend, but the truth is no one can steal my Joy. You see they would have to have all these bags to make the field grow. And besides the barn called The Lamp of The Body is guarded day and night by the King that owns the Valley of Endurance were I work.”

Mr. Empty of Heart said: “I can’t see him?” “Yes, I know, said Mr. Patience, I cannot provide you with the glasses you must have to see him; the King himself has to give you these glasses, they are called Faith. If you actually do start to grow the crop Joy he will provide you with a pair of these glasses and he himself will guard all your works carefully.”

Mr. Patience now said: “Take two handfuls of the sack of Humility and put it into that bucket and follow me into the field of Joy.” So out they both went into the field of Joy with Mr. Empty of Heart carrying the bucket of Humility. Once there, Mr. Patience led him to a patch of weeds.

Mr. Patience then said: “these are ugly weeds called Jealousy and Envy; they grew here overnight while I was sleeping, please put some of the Humility on them and watch what happens.”

So Mr. Empty of Heart did just as he was told; he sprinkled the Humility over the weeds and immediately they dry up and the wind blew them away! And as quickly as they had disappeared the crop of Joy reappeared.

Now Mr. Empty of Heart said: “tell me Mr. Patience, how did these ugly weeds get here in the first place.”

Mr. Patience face turned red: “Well, ah, you see my friend; I let them grow here for a little while because I got jealous of the easy life and Fun everyone seem to be having in the Valley of Everywhere. But it seems the great King I serve had mercy on me and sent you here to remind me of what I’ve gain through all these years of hard work in the Valley of Endurance.

Mr. Empty of Heart said: “Why Mr. Patience would you tell me these things about yourself?”

“Well my friend I could have lied, but then you would not have known the whole truth – in how to grow the crop Joy; and besides there were days in my past I would not have told you the truth, in fact, not even to myself for pride. But after I destroyed my field of Joy so many times for foolish pride I finally developed the bay of Humility.”

“But tell me why Mr. Patience would you put yourself through all of this work and pain.?”

“Well Mr. Empty of Heart it’s not really pain it is Joy! Look around you at my field; if I were to replace the Joy with Fun the barn called the Lamp of the Body would slowly grow dark. Then I would have to eat more Fun to experience a little Joy and soon all the Joy would be gone and all the contents in the barn Lamp of The Body. Then I too would become Empty of Heart – like you.”

“I don’t understand Mr. Patience?” “Yes, I know the glasses I loan you help you to see into the spirit world, but they also protect your eyes from the light of the fruits of the spirit. If you could only see what I see The Valley of Everywhere would be in complete darkness to you.”

“I am confused help me to understand?” “Ok said Mr. Patience, what type of fertilize do you use to grow the crop of fun?”

“Ah am not sure?” “Oh yes you do Mr. Empty of Heart, moral filthiness the dirtier the better, idol worship, witchcraft, drunkenness, jealousy, anger, orgies, and so on... who could name them all? Listen friend these things are Fun, but they are also moral darkness causing the light for the fruits of the spirit to go out. The more you do them to for Fun the more you have to do them for a moment of pleasure to hid the pain from the fruits of darkness.”

Mr. Patience said: “follow me and I will show you the real value of the fruits of Joy!”

So down through the field of Joy they both went until they reached the end of the Valley of Endurance and there at its end was a walled park. The walls were made of pure ivory and trimmed in gold the gates were made of pearls.

And as they step into the park through the pearl gate, Mr. Empty of Heart breath was taken away – he thought he would die. He said: “I, I am fearful I shouldn’t be here.”

Mr. Patience then said: “don’t be afraid let me show you the center of the garden.”

In the center of the garden was the most beautiful tree Mr. Empty of Heart had ever seen; the tree was full of blossoms and peace filled the air – so there was no feeling of fear or death.

Mr. Patience then said: “this friend is the Tree of Life and here I bring my crop of Joy each day and put it around the tree. Some day the Tree of Life will produce the most precious fruits called Eternal Life.

And at that time I will have finished my labors in the Valley of Endurance and I will go to the great Kings palace and live forever in the sweetest Joy found anywhere.”

Now Mr. Patience turns to Empty of Heart and said these words: “I want to share my gift of Joy with you. Please take some of my Joy and grow you own crop and then you will no longer be called Empty of Heart, but a garden of peace and joy.”

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