

Feeling Overwhelmed? Jenny Woodard / Minister to Children

Are you having moments when you feel overwhelmed? Overwhelmed with work, the kids' schoolwork, the financial burden you're experiencing, or not knowing what's coming next? Maybe it's a loss that you are grieving that just seems too much to bear at times. It may be the pile of laundry and dishes that are sitting undone or the silence of a very empty and lonely house. Feeling overwhelmed is a real thing. It's something that we all experience from time to time and some of us more than others. Some of us kick into high gear when we feel it coming on, in order to push it aside. Others, like myself, shut down. Either way, it's real for all of us. It's a real thing for parents of one child or parents of 6. Those working from home and those working away from home. We all face the struggle of feeling overwhelmed in some way and one person's reason for being overwhelmed is not bigger than another's. The feeling is the same, no matter the reason or the surrounding situation.

BUT this state of being overwhelmed is not without HOPE. Those who are in Christ are never without HOPE. If you are overwhelmed, consider these things...

1. **Remember that you are never alone.** Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." God is real and His presence is real. We cannot physically see him, but because of Jesus' shed blood on the cross, we have been given permanent communion with God himself. He is with us in His creation that surrounds us, in His Word when we read it, in His Church, that walks alongside us, and in His Son, that lives in us.
2. **Hand over that which overwhelms you.** 1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." It's easy to say, "Cast your cares on God." It's much harder to actually take hold of your worries or fears and lay them at the feet of Jesus. Imagine taking a literal hold of that thing overwhelming you in your mind and handing it over to the only One who can do something about it. It might not mean that God answers right away and in the way you'd like or that he transforms the situation immediately, but laying it down at the foot of the cross for the blood of Jesus to cover will bring peace in overwhelming times.
3. **Turn your heart towards praise.** Praise God for who he is. Begin naming His blessings and provisions in your life. The ways you've seen Him pull you through in the past. Don't wait to praise Him until your overwhelmed state passes or the anxiety fades. Even now, praise Him. Psalm 42:5 "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation." Thanksgiving and praise lift our head off of what is causing our inner turmoil and onto our God who is our hope and salvation.
4. **Reclaim your purpose.** Romans 8:28 "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." As believers, we are called to glorify God and make Him known, but the enemy will use anything to distract us from that purpose and mission. Turn what it is that is overwhelming you into an opportunity for you to glorify God and make Him known. Reclaim it for God to use for His glory and His purposes!
5. **Run to the person of peace.** Ephesians 2:13-14 "But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace." When we constantly fight for peace, in our inner being, by looking this way or that, we're missing it. Peace isn't found in what we do or don't do. It's not found in what we have or don't have, what might or might not happen. Peace comes from one place: the person of Jesus Christ. Run to him right now. He is fully capable of removing the chains of whatever has you bound and relieving the weight of everything that overwhelms you. Jesus is the answer. He is our HOPE.

Be strengthened today by remembering that you are never alone, laying down that which overwhelms you, turning your heart towards praise, reclaiming your purpose and running to the person of peace, Jesus.