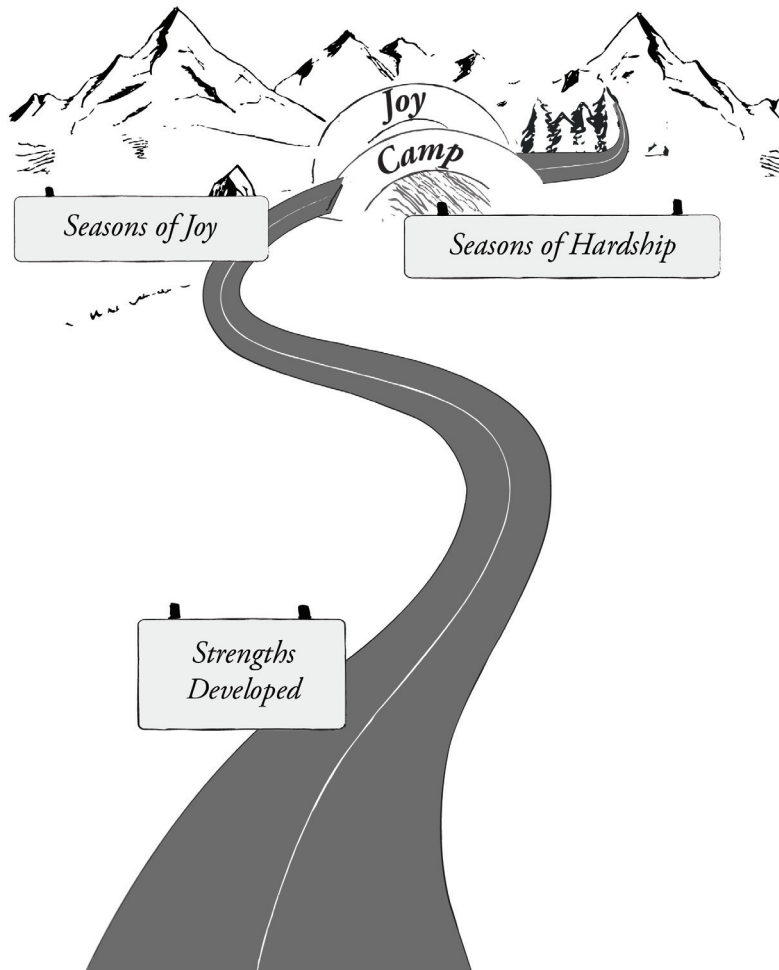


AN EXPERIENTIAL IMAGERY EXERCISE

You may color it and write on each side of the pathway leading to “Joy Camp.” Write dates, locations, or seasons, below or next to the signs, of the times you experienced joy or faced hardship. Try to place them chronologically so you will have a better visual.



Suggestion: Consider keeping a journal of times when you are especially aware of God's faithfulness in your life. Write down several Scripture verses that can bring encouragement to you in a difficult season. (For example, Isaiah 41:10: "'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'")

PRINCIPLE

We are wired for joy, not sorrow. The fear of losing our safety and joy drives us toward the embrace of addictions, insecure attachment styles, and behaviors that numb our feelings. Story-sharing moments in the presence of a safe friend recreate connection and lead to healthy bonding. In order to find our way through the seasons of sorrow, covered in ashes, we must identify the seed we still possess and plant it in the ground before moving on to the next season.

Briefly recall some times in your life when you experienced adversity. What miracles have sprung forth from the ashes of these times? Take time to recall joy that God has restored to your life after a loss. Choose to remember times that put a smile on your face.

Take the time to recreate your pathway to a place of safety and joy by writing down the following: Who are your core friends? List them and describe the qualities that you treasure in your friendship with each of them.

Think of characteristics, beliefs, and strengths you developed during your times of hardship. Which ones could you utilize when empathizing with a friend who may be going through a hard time? How could your story encourage him or her and establish a safe connection?

Ask yourself if there are people in your past or present whom you need to forgive. Sometimes you may even need to forgive yourself. By utilizing the principles in this chapter, remind yourself that you are not a victim of your circumstances. You can remove “the grave clothes” by learning how to tell your story through the lens of victory as you embrace the truth that God has been and will always be present in your life.

What seeds could you plant along the pathway of ashes in order for new life and joy to reemerge inside of you?