

THE LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

August 5, 2016

Dear Friends,

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

The first definition of “joy” in Merriam-Webster’s dictionary is “a feeling of great happiness.” When you hear the word joy, what comes to mind? Perhaps you remember a particularly happy day, or season of your life. Maybe you think of your family, or friends, or people whose company you enjoy. When I think of joy, I think of the times in my life when my heart was filled with love and happiness, both past and present. I remember family vacations, becoming a mom for the first time, Christmas at my grandmother’s house, meeting my husband, summer evenings at home, my puppies....I could go on. But you know what doesn’t come to mind when I hear the word joy? The loss of beloved family members. The demise of my first marriage. Bad choices that I’ve made which resulted in others being hurt. Broken relationships that seem impossible to fix. Again, I could go on. None of these painful experiences evoke any feelings of joy, nor do I remember them fondly. Call me crazy, but fear, hurt and anger tend to put a real damper on my joy.

Notice however, the very first thing James says in his letter after greeting the followers of Christ. *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds...”* He doesn’t say *consider it tolerable* or *consider it necessary* – he says *consider it pure joy*. Notice also that James also doesn’t say *feel joy* – he says *consider it pure joy*. The word *consider* calls us to a mental exercise rather than a feeling. Rather than allowing ourselves to be robbed of our joy because of the trials with which we are faced, we can choose to consider these trials pure joy because they test our faith. The testing of our faith results in perseverance, and strengthens and perfects our faith in Jesus Christ. Thus we can *consider our trials pure joy* because we know that they help grow and mature our faith.

Every day at The Lighthouse Foundation, we encounter people who are facing trials and hardships that most of us cannot even imagine. ***Thus far in 2016, we are serving over 300 families a week in our food bank.*** Lack of food, shelter, transportation and employment are the first needs that are presented to us. But the real needs, the real trials and hardships of the people we serve go much deeper than lacking basic necessities. Broken relationships, addictions, abuse, mental illness, physical disabilities, and lack of education are just a few of the roadblocks that our clients face. We pray with them. We build relationships with them so that they trust us and know that we truly have their best interests in mind. And we lift their spirits by encouraging them with the hope that God can use their trials and difficulties to grow their faith in Him. So many of our clients choose to come back and help others once they have succeeded in overcoming their trials! In fact, The Lighthouse’s newest resident manager at one of our transitional housing facilities is a young woman who was a former resident. How wonderful it is to see God working in the lives of those we serve!

I pray that you will find encouragement from the words of James and that when you find yourself facing trials of many kinds, you will be able to consider them *pure joy*.

Blessings,



Cindy Cipoletti, Executive Director