

RETHINKING *my thinking*

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Issue: # 2
Battling Joy
“Stookers”

How Angela can partner with you to reach women in your church

Blooming in faith through His transforming grace

Battling Joy “Stookers”: Reclaiming Joy for Today by Angela Mackey

I want to be superbly eloquent and gracious in speech at all times. However since I like to talk often and quickly, I sometimes get tongue tied. Hence the word “stooker.” One day in haste I tried to tell a friend that she took or stole my seat. Instead I said stook. We all got a good laugh and I had a new word.

A joy stooker is anything we allow to take or steal our joy for today. Those insidious ways we allow our mind to wander. They seem no big deal at first, but suddenly we are unhappy and unable or unwilling to see the joy God intended for us, in all situations, in all our todays.

Nehemiah 8:10b says, “Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” If joy in the LORD is what gives us strength then you can bet the enemy of our souls wants us miserable. Why then do allow our minds to wander, our thinking to get off track and keep us from experiencing the joy of the LORD that is our strength?

We don’t battle the things that steal our joy because we do not recognize the things that steal our joy. So let’s uncover a few common things that steal our joy for today.

1. **Comparison.** It starts early with, “Why isn’t my brownie as big as hers mommy?” But comparison doesn’t stop there. It becomes a way of life. Clothes, cars, shoes, gadgets, hair, talents, jobs, ministries, and even spouses become points of comparison. When we focus on what others have we miss out on the blessings we have. Instead of comparing ourselves let us make a list of things for which we are thankful.
2. **Misplaced Focus.** We begin to focus on a point in our lives either in the past that was better or in the future when something we long for may happen. We pine away for what was, how happy we were, or we pin our hope for joy on some

Truths to Battle Joy “Stookers”

Comparison:

Exodus 20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Ephesians 5:20 “...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Focus:

Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Nothing Changes:

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..”



Battling Joy Stokers continued

future happening. We forget the present and merely exist living in a fog of what was or what may be. What we need to do is ask God to give us a vision for the now in our lives. Then we can change our focus from what we want or what we miss to what He wants us to do in the now.

3. **Nothing Changes.** We often look at the difficult situations in our lives and feel like there is nothing that changes. A relationship is strained and difficult and we as humans see no way for it to be healthy again. Politics at work are causing a great deal of stress and we see no way that it will ever change. May we never forget we serve a God who is able and who is in the business of making possible the impossible. He heals relationships, works in the politics of nations and corporations. God does not change, but in Him and through Him our difficult situations in life can change. When we begin to feel hopeless that nothing will ever change, let us begin to pray God-sized prayers for change. Often He will change you as He works in these difficult situations.

Joy in the Lord is not something that comes to us naturally. It is something that we must be willing to fight for. John Piper wrote in his book *Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce*, "Joy in Christ was so crucial to living the Christian life and persevering in political justice that Wilberforce fought for it with relentless vigilance."

Father God help us as we battle joy "stokers." May we truly find our joy in You so that we may live a victorious Christian life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Rethinking My Thinking News

Angela had the privilege to go to the Proverbs 31 Ministries conference, She Speaks, in July. While there she pitched her book idea to two acquisitions editors from two publishing houses as well as one literary agent. Her book is titled *Difficult to Conceive: A Godly Perspective for the Road Ahead*. It offers infertile women encouragement, hope, and direction. It also provides practical strategies for how to face the faith crises that are common to women dealing with infertility. These women are on her heart because she has dealt with infertility.

If Angela can help you minister to infertile women in your church in any way, please contact her.



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Speaking Topics

Battling Joy "Stokers" Joy stokers are things we allow to steal or take our joy for today. Financial stress, health problems, relationships in turmoil, and the disease of comparison are joy stokers that we all encounter. In this session you will learn:

- How we allow the stokers to steal our joy.
- Practical tools to battle joy stokers.
- How to find joy despite our circumstances.

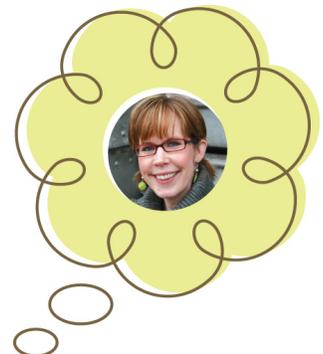
Honor Changes Things

Nothing can raise a parents' blood pressure faster than when our children behave disrespectfully, whine, or complain. In this session you will discover:

- How honor teaching honor changes your and your kids' behavior.
- Practical tools to teach kids' honor.
- The difference between obedience and honor.

Other Topics

Angela speaks on many other topics as well. She would be pleased to pray with you and develop a custom talk for your specific needs and audience.



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