

THE CHOICE TO REJOICE

Galatians 5:22; Romans 5:1-3,11

- ***What would make me really happy in life?***
- **If we're only happy when everything is going good, we're going to be unhappy for much of our life.**
- *"The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy . . . ."* (Galatians 5:22)
- **Happiness is dependent on life's circumstances; but joy is a deeper emotion that is not dependent on the outer circumstances of life.**
- *"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!"* (Philippians 4:4)
- **We need to have joy to: 1) live an enjoyable life, 2) have good relationships, 3) be a good witness for Jesus, and 4) survive life's struggles (Nehemiah 8:10).**
- *"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!"* (Philippians 4:4)
- ***What are some keys to constantly experiencing Joy in our lives and relationships?***

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

STRENGTHENING OUR <u>TRUST</u> IN THE LORD

- *"Those who trust the Lord will be joyful."* (Proverbs 16:20)
- **Joy comes from *Trusting The Lord For Our Future Destiny*.**
    - *"Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege . . . and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory."* (Romans 5:1-2)
    - **Knowing we have a future in Heaven brings joy to our lives.**
- **Joy comes from *Trusting The Lord In Our Present Difficulties*.**
    - *"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance."* (Romans 5:3)

    - **A person's perspective determines how they will react to life's circumstances.**
- *"The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust Him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy."* (Psalm 28:7)

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

DEVELOPING AN ATTITUDE OF <u>GRATITUDE</u>

- *"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances . . ."* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- **Gratitude is considered the healthiest of all emotions and produces more emotional energy than any other attitude in life.**
- **Our attitude is not contingent upon how well life's circumstances are going but instead is a reflection of how "*CLOSE"* our relationship is with God.**
- *"My heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving."* (Psalms 28:7)

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

CULTIVATING A <u>GIVING</u> HEART

- *"They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity."* (2 Corinthians 8:2)
- "Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give." (Eleanor Roosevelt)
- **Generosity is not a random behavior, but a consistent trait of being willing to give of our monies, time and possessions to or for others.**
- *"You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* (Acts 20:35)

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

CONNECTING REGULARLY WITH OTHER <u>BELIEVERS</u>

- *"They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity"* (Acts 2:46)
- **Our relationship with other believers shows us the spiritual temperature of our lives since God has called us to live in fellowship with one another.**
- Jesus - *"Where two or three gather together as My followers, I am there among them."* (Matthew 18:20)
- ***Life Groups* meet in homes, offices, etc in order to grow closer to God, closer in friendship with others, and to reach their community for Christ.**

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

GETTING INVOLVED IN <u>SERVING</u> OTHERS

- *"My servants will sing for joy..."* (Isaiah 65:14)
- **The happiest people usually are too busy serving and helping others, making a difference in the world, to ask themselves, "Am I Happy?"**
- Jesus - *"If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it."* (Mark 8:35)
- **Pity, self doubt, and worry happens the more a person becomes self-focused; but joy is often experienced as we get our focus off of ourselves and begin seeking to help and serve others.**
- *"The Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do."* (Ephesians 6:8)
- ***What areas of service, inside and outside of the church, could God use me to make a difference in others lives and bring joy into my own life?***

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

HELPING OTHERS COME TO KNOW <u>JESUS</u>

- Jesus - *"When he has found his lost sheep, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'"* (Luke 15:5-6)
- **When we see people come to faith in Jesus that we've prayed for, ministered to, shared our faith with and invited to Life Groups and/or Church services, we will be filled with great joy.**
- "Most Americans have never been invited to church, yet 82% indicate that they would be at least 'somewhat likely' to attend if invited." (Thom Rainer)
- Jesus - *"There is great joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God"* (Luke 15:7)

Constantly Experiencing JOY Requires:

DEEPENING OUR <u>FELLOWSHIP</u> WITH THE LORD

- *"So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."* (Romans 5:11)
- **Christians can be joyful no matter what our circumstances because we have the Lord's presence and friendship in our lives.**
- *"You (O Lord) will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasures of living with You forever."* (Psalm 16:11)
- **Nothing or no one should steal our joy if we know the Lord is with us.**
- *"Each morning I will sing with joy about Your unfailing love (O Lord). For You have been my refuge, a place of safety when I am in distress."* (Psalm 59:16)

- Jesus - *"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"* (John 15:11)

- **Jesus wants to fill our lives with His joy, and will do so when we put into practice the principles that we've learned today.**
- ***What spiritual practices do I need to implement in order to experience more of the Lord's joy in my life and relationships?***
- *"The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy . . .."* (Galatians 5:22)