

Jesus is our Joy

Romans 5:1-3, Luke 2:8-12, Philippians 4:4

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In what or whom do you find your pride and joy? What brings laughter to your heart and a feeling of peace and contentment? What brings you joy?

Two Events from the Advent of Jesus speak of extraordinary joy. The shepherds were told to not be afraid, because the messenger was bringing news of great Joy. The Savior was born. The wise men were filled with joy as they worshipped the baby King.

Joy, as an emotion, can come and go. We frequently feel we have lost our joy, if only for a season. Like all the other attributes of Christ (Fruit of the Spirit), joy can be restored.

The **FIRST** way to recover joy is to remember where true and lasting joy as a gift comes from... our Father, through Jesus the Son.

SECOND, we are assured of Joy, even in the storm. Even when it appears the world is crumbling around us. We have joy because, *"On Christ the solid Rock I stand."* We hear His Words and obey them, then we have wisdom, building our house on the Rock of Jesus Christ.

FINALLY, joy comes through serving others. The principle here is taking the focus off self and freely giving to others. We receive when we give. We are grateful when we are given. We find joy when we look for ways to bless others with the blessings we have received.

1. We receive Joy from Jesus

a) Joy in Justice

Joy is confident expectation of all the Lord has for us on the cross and in His resurrection. First, joy at knowing our sins are forgiven. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

"David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it: ⁷"Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. ⁸ Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin." (Romans 4:6-8, quoting Ps. 32)

We rejoice (re-joy) both now and in the future, knowing we have been made right with God (reconciliation), through the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus is our joy, Jesus is joy!

b) Joy in Obedience

The first step of obedience is repentance. Hearing the words, *"Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!"* There is joy in the act of bending our knee, bowing before His throne, confessing our sins, and being made right with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We do this again and again.

"For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

c) Yes, and Amen!

Do you know Jesus as your Lord and savior? Have you said "yes" to His invitation to enter into relationship with Him? He says, *"come to me all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest"* (Matt 11:28). Jesus said, *"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."* (Rev. 3:20)

2. JOY - Journey of Yielding

We experience joy even in the storm.

"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. ³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance." (Romans 5:1-3) NLT

a) We are on a pilgrimage, a journey, one that takes a lifetime.

b) Trials, hardships, problems, difficulties etc. help us develop endurance.

The life principle of developing, training our bodies.

The same is true of our spirits... thus spiritual discipline.

Season of prayer and fasting... practicing the spiritual disciplines.

"Jesus, I give everyone and everything to you!" The One Minute Pause... APP

c) The Fellowship (of the Ring). This journey is best done not alone.

What small group are you in? Who is speaking into your life? In whom are you being a blessing?

3. JOY - Jovial, Observant, Yearning

We activate joy when we give it away.

Joy is serving others, using your God-given gifts to bless others.

a) Jovial. We receive Joy when we give it away.

Getting the focus off myself...

Miser and Miserable have the same root word.

"But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy." (Philippians 2:17)

Give Lavishly, Live Abundantly (Helen Steiner Rice)

*The more you give, the more you get
the more you laugh, the less you fret
the more you do unselfishly
the more you live abundantly
the more of everything you share
the more you'll always have to spare
the more you love, the more you'll find
that life is good and friends are kind
for only what we give away
enriches us from day to day.*

b. Observant

The most helpful people are the happiest.

The most unhappy people are those focused on themselves.

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon." (Philippians 4:4-5)

Paul compares joy with being unselfish and considerate.

c. Yearning

DEF. A feeling of intense longing for something:

- We yearn to know God more, to allow Jesus to be more and more at home in our hearts (Eph. 3).
- We yearn for His return, for meeting Jesus face to face.
- We yearn to be a servant of Jesus, who is doing what He has called and gifted us to do. Using my gifts to help others.

We are to be:

People of Hope
People of Peace
People of Joy
People of Love
People of Adoration
People of Worship
People of Prayer

How are you serving the Lord? How are you serving others? Christmas is the season of giving, and that does bring us joy, but how might you bring the season of giving, of yourself, throughout the whole year?