

Joy!

We all want to feel good about life; whatever is meaningful, we want more of it! We call that “feel good” different things... happiness, joy, maybe bliss. Happiness is being pleased with what happens. Happiness is great, but it's caused by what happens outside of us, around us. Happiness can go as fast as it comes. Joy is different, and it doesn't have to go.

WHAT THE WORLD SYSTEM SAYS BRINGS THE FEEL GOOD...

Money

1 Tim 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:9,10 "want to get rich" = "the love of money" ; to spend on their own lust

Sin

Heb 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Heb 11:25 - NKJV

25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

Heb 11:25 - KJV

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Heb 11:25 - RSV

25 choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT JOY ...

1. Joy is a defining characteristic of the Kingdom of God.
2. Joy is born out of our relationship with God.
3. We CHOOSE to find our joy in Jesus.
4. God-given joy cannot be taken away.
5. Joy can increase.

1. Joy is a defining characteristic of the Kingdom of God.

Rom 14:17

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...

Gal 5:22-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

2. Joy is born out of our relationship with God.

Ps 16:11

11 You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Acts 2:28

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

- Joy in God's presence!

1 Chron 16:27

27 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy in his dwelling place.

Isa 56:7

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations."

And we are his temple
as born again Jesus
followers!

Acts 8:6-8

6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. 8 So there was great **joy** in that city.

- The healing and driving out evil spirits were born out of Philip's relationship with God, which brought joy.

1 Thess 1:6

6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the **joy given** by the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:8 (read 1 Pe 1:3-9)

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious **joy**...

Rom 15:13

13 May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 15:13 "peace in believing" NKJV / RSV / NAS

*A river of joy, given by God, is available to be received by faith!
Not given with an eyedropper... but big buckets, causing an overflow!*

3. We CHOOSE to find our joy in Jesus.

Ps 37:4

4 **Delight yourself** in the LORD
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Hab 3:17-18

17 Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
18 yet **I will rejoice** in the LORD,
I will **be joyful** in God my Savior.

Phil 4:4

4 **Rejoice** in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!**

- Notice it is a directive... rejoice!
- Why? Because we don't know any better? No.
- Because we want to run from real life, and play mental games with ourselves? No!

- Because we know God is our Father, Jesus is our Lord, we are in his family, He loves us, he shows us truth, he gives us abundant life, we can know Him personally, he never fails us and we are enabled to live free of guilt.
- But ultimately, we rejoice in our own relationship with God.

Isa 58:13-14

13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 **then you will find your joy** in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

John 15:9-11

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain/abide in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain/abide in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain/abide in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you...

- Essentially, if God is truly at the center, if Jesus is your Lord, you FOLLOW HIM, you SERVE HIM then **you will find your joy** in Him
- Our relationship with Jesus is not just a legal one; it's a vital, living one.
 - If your marriage is just a legal relationship, it's stale and lifeless.
 - You must give to your spouse, you must take action to help them to have a living relationship.
 - So with God.
- The chaos in your mind settles when you put first things first... not just in word, but in action.
 - Your spiritual family (the Body of Christ) is here to help you grow.
 - Making disciples is helping people take the image of Christ IN them, and have that image permeate THROUGH them more and more, day by day.
 - Jesus being at the center means we ALL are making disciples!
 - You can't serve God without serving people. They are inseparable.

Further emphasis that we choose to find our joy in Him:

Col 3:1-4

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set** your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set** your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- otherwise, we BY DEFAULT will have hearts and minds set on earthly things
- in other words we must choose to set our minds on Jesus and his kingdom

James 1:2-5

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

- Why? Because we just like adversity and trials? No. Because we see the value of approaching trials and testing well... specifically to develop maturity, completeness.

4. God-given joy cannot be taken away.

John 16:19-22

19 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? 20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy...

- .20 – grieving because of Jesus’ beating and death; the one they’d hoped in would be gone.
- .21 – a time of pain, followed by a lifetime of intimacy
- .22 – disciples’ grief over events surrounding Jesus; they WILL see him again and rejoice over what happened to Jesus
BUT...
- .22 – After Jesus’ resurrection (when they were to see him again) “nobody will take away their/our joy!”

- Because the source of joy is the resurrected Jesus who lives in us!
- They no longer would find and lose their joy based on what happened to Jesus being around them.
- He would live in them, where nothing and nobody could take Him away!

Acts 13:49-52

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

- The leaders were kicked out of the region, yet the disciples in that area were filled with joy.
- Joy was not tied to, or generated by, having particular people around them.
- Once again, this is the reality of Christ living in us and through us!

It is possible to lose your joy. Gal 4:15 What has happened to all your joy?

They had lost their joy by adding to the message, the truth, they had heard and believed. Keep focused on Jesus and his kingdom and you won't lose your joy!

5. Joy can increase.

John 17:13

13 "I am coming to you [the Father] now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

- Notice that Jesus' words would help his disciples have the full measure of joy.

Phil 2:1-2

2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

- Joy is complete when the Gospel, the reality of a Spirit filled life, is LIVED OUT toward others!!

John 15:9-13

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 3:29-30

29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30 He must become greater; I must become less.

- John The Baptist had his joy complete because the bridegroom he looked for was now here (Jesus).

3 John 4

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Not "that they've heard about the truth.. once or twice".... NO! They are living out the truth!

Resolve to find your joy in Jesus and live out his truth in all of life!

- Relationship with God is at the core of life. Don't neglect the core while the peripheral issues get "handled". Don't make a satellite the center, or you throw the orbits off!
- Who or whatever you put at the center, the Master, The Lord of your life, has enormous influence on you.
- The joy you have from a relationship with God will permeate every aspect of your life, if you let it.
- Lastly, other followers of Jesus help make up his Body, his Family... your spiritual family. His will is that we simply follow him together. So, full joy in Christ will require that we learn how to live as his family, on his mission to make disciples. Joy comes from living with Jesus at the center of our lives!

