

# The Christian's Joy

**Introduction.** Without joy, we can do nothing. We come to God because none of us have it within ourselves, except momentarily, to be joyous. Joy is a product of abundance; it is the overflow of vitality. It is life working together harmoniously.

We try to get joy through entertainment. We pay someone to make jokes, tell stories, act dramatically, and sing songs. We buy the vitality of another's imagination to divert and enliven our lives. The enormous entertainment industry in America is a sign of a desire for happiness, but a lack of real joy. But entertainment never penetrates our lives and never changes our nature. The effects are extremely temporary — a few minutes, a few hours, a few days at most. When we run out of money, the joy trickles away for it cannot be commanded, purchased, or arranged.

The beginning of real joy is the decision to obey the Lord (cp. Zechariah 9:9; Luke 2:10). This demonstrates that joy is not dependent on our good fortune or good health. Real joy exists in the midst of what happens in every life: pain, suffering, loneliness, and misfortune.

## ***I. The Difference Between Joy And Happiness***

- A. When grace and truth came in the person of Jesus (John 1:17), so did genuine joy, not superficial feelings of happiness.
- B. While we may use the words interchangeably, for our purpose today, we need to ponder the difference between joy and happiness.
  1. Happiness is based on circumstances, but joy is rooted in substance. Happiness may be about possessions, but joy is about Christ.
  2. Happiness is external, but joy is internal. Physical and material possessions may make us happy, but joy comes from the heart — the inner person.
  3. Happiness is based on chance, but joy on choice. The word "happy" comes from an old English word "hap" which means luck, chance, or accident. Joy is a decision.
  4. Happiness is temporary, but joy is timeless. Feelings of happiness will ebb and flow, but joy is constant and unbounded.

## ***II. Occasions Of Rejoicing***

- A. Occasions when Christ rejoiced.
  1. He rejoiced in God's method of revelation (Luke 10:21-24).
  2. He rejoices in finding lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7).
  3. His joy abides in Christians (John 15:11).
  4. His joy is given through His words (John 17:13).
  5. His joy sustained Him at the cross (Hebrews 12:1-2).

- B. Occasions when Christians rejoiced.
  - 1. The Samaritans (Acts 8:5-8).
  - 2. The eunuch (Acts 8:39).
  - 3. The disciples (Acts 13:52).
  - 4. Paul (2 Corinthians 7:2-4).
  - 5. Saints addressed in Peter's epistle (1 Peter 1:8).
  - 6. John (1 John 1:1-4).

### ***III. The Importance Of Joy***

- A. Joy is more than just a "good feeling." It is an emotion which sustains and nurtures the Christian. Joy in a Christian's life can exist no matter the circumstances.
- B. The New Testament is filled with the examples of those who had joy or rejoiced, even in some bad circumstances.
  - 1. Persecution (Acts 5:41).
  - 2. Imprisonment (Acts 16:23-25).
  - 3. Poverty (2 Corinthians 6:10).
  - 4. Affliction (2 Corinthians 12:10).
  - 5. Loss of property (Hebrews 10:34).
  - 6. Violent trials (1 Peter 4:12-13).
- C. These people had real problems.
  - 1. We can be joyful during any problem we have. One of the most remarkable facts is that laughter does not exclude weeping; abiding joy is not an escape from sorrow.
  - 2. Pain and hardship still come, but they are unable to drive out the happiness of the one redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
  - 3. The joy that develops in a Christian does not come from feeling good about yourself, but feeling good about God and His truth (Romans 5:11; Philippians 1:25; 4:1-4).

**Conclusion.** Joy is not a moral requirement for a Christian; it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire in order to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience. Christians are too often guilty of allowing "joy killers" to rob life of its radiance. They include, but are not limited to, worry, guilt, selfishness, resentment, and fear. These sap our spiritual strength and drain our spirits, which, in the end, diminishes our joy.

George Bernard Shaw wrote, "This is true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy." Today, you can have real joy. It comes by obeying God's word. We offer the time now. We try so hard in our own futile ways to get the joy that we want.

God can give it to us right now. Will you devote yourself to Him and start experiencing real joy?