



CHRISTIAN LIBRARY INTERNATIONAL

Bringing Christ to the Imprisoned

Christian Leadership

How to influence the ideas, opinions and actions of others for Jesus Christ.

Joy Addendum to Lesson 4: The Presence of God

Moses wanted the world to know that the God of the universe was pleased with Him and His people (Exodus 33:16). He wasn't trying to draw people to himself but to the God who created him. It is only God who makes a difference in a life or a nation. It is only God who can make us distinguishable from the followers of false gods and false religions.

For example, two missionaries from India shared how God had distinguished Himself in their community. One of the Hindu's in the village had accepted Christ and was "kicked out" of his family and his livelihood. He lost all his money and possessions.

Hindus worship many gods and may have many idols set up in their homes. One of the man's Hindu friends said to him, "How can you be happy? You don't have anything." The Hindu friend kept watching this new Christian, and finally one day the Hindu came to church with a big sack. He walked up to the pastor and emptied his idols on the ground and said, "I want to trade in these gods for the Happy God!"

Joy means being glad and happy. God wants us to be happy **in Him**. We are to be sad and mourn when we sin. In fact anything in your life that sets itself up against God will rob you of your joy. But of course we repent and rejoice in the blood of the Lamb!!

As Christian leader you will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit not only for your own sin but to those you are influencing as well. The goal is not to point fingers or shame anyone but to lead them gently and lovingly back to Christ. For example, if you know of personal conflicts, your job is to help resolve these and pray for fellowship to be restored.

Joy comes from worshipping the one, true God. It doesn't come from worshipping false gods or having material goods. It may seem like worldly success, money or popularity will make a person happy for it can bring a spurt of excitement. But it is just a spurt and does not last. Read and meditate on Psalm 89:15-16, 90:14, Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 13:44-45, Luke 2:10-11, 10:21, John 3:29, 15:9-11, 17:6, 13-14, Acts 2:28,46, Revelation 1:14-16 for pure and holy joy.

When we speak of joy, we are referring to a joyful spirit, not joyful circumstances. There are valid reasons such as the death of a child, spouse or parent that may bring a real sense of loss and sadness. But the spirit is still at peace relying on God's presence and healing.

Lesson 4b

One reason Christians lack joy is because they are not trusting and obeying God. No matter what trial or hardship comes, we trust in God's goodness and plan for us. We continue to actively and passively obey His word.

For those that lack joy, Jude 1:24 is a good verse to memorize. The Greek work for joy in this verse is agalliasis (ἀγαλλίασις). It means extremely or exceedingly joyful.¹ *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--* Yes, God is able to keep you in His will and fill you with complete joy!

Joy is a precious and needed gift in the life of a Christian. A leader who is joyful even when facing apparent loss will have a great influence on others for the Kingdom. Pray for and practice joy in His presence and share with others so they too can be exceedingly glad in the presence of our sovereign God.

Perhaps you are or will go through times when you just not happy. Satan may be putting thoughts in your head to torment and hurt you. There are other times when you are ill or facing intense persecution. You may be losing sight of God's presence and focusing on the pain.

Here are some steps to help you regain the joy of the LORD:

1. Examine your conscience. Is your focus on the Lord Jesus or your problems? Are you thinking about your own weakness or loneliness instead of God's sovereignty and vast power? Do you trust God to enable you to do anything He has called you to do? Make sure your heart is turned toward God and not yourself. Check your attitude and make sure you place your hope in the God that can change a person, place or thing at any time He chooses. His timing is perfect.
2. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any **unconfessed** sin. Have you grieved or quenched the Spirit in any way? Have you been disobedient? Have you failed to trust God in your present circumstances? Have you failed to be thankful in all circumstances?
3. Repent & Reconcile with God and your neighbor (in other words don't engage in this sin any more and do immediately whatever God has asked or will ask of you)
4. Meditate on Jude 1:24 and other verses that promise joy. Tell God that you believe His promises for joy and humbly ask Him to return joy to your heart and mind.
5. As you pray for joy ask God if there is anything that you need to do to have your joy returned. For example, perhaps you are not caring properly for your body and your health is affecting your joy. Be open to what God says according to His Word and not the sinful nature and the devil.
6. Remember Romans 8:28-29 and Jeremiah 29:11-13. **May God continually and constantly fill you with joy in His Presence!!!**

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¹ BibleWorks 6