



Attitudes of the Heart

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The Holy Bible, King James Version (KJV)

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Preface

Many churches put an inordinate emphasis on outward conformity and reformation and teach very little on spiritual attitudes of the heart. For this reason, when I became the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in April of 2010, one of my first priorities was to teach a series on internal attitudes that the Holy Spirit desires to produce in every Christian. This book is the culmination of that series.

How to use this Book

Open the Bible. This book is designed for Bible study. In order to fully benefit from the studies contained here, you must be willing to open your Bible and search the scriptures for answers. These studies are based upon the King James Version of the Bible. If you are accustomed to reading another version you may need to have both opened in order to discover the right answers.

Take your Time. The purpose of any Bible study is not to race to the finish line. If your time spent studying scripture does not produce a better understanding of the word of God then it is in vain. Take your time going through these studies. Stop and think about what you've read and take the time to apply the truths to your life.

Reflect. Throughout these studies you will see the symbol  followed by a question. There is no room to write an answer because these are designed for meditation. Take a minute and think about how the question applies practically to your life. Apply the study and be willing to change where God prompts you to. You will also see questions prefaced by **Think**. These were originally questions for open discussion in our church. There are no right or wrong answers for these just your own personal opinion.

Pray. Bible truths are only imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. While you study, pray that God would help you to understand and apply His word to your life.

Contact

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Joy


Philippians 4:4


Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

Christian philosopher C.S. Lewis once said, "I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for joy."¹

Our world seems to be on an endless search for joy and satisfaction. Some attempt to find joy in material things, others in accomplishments, others still in sinful indulgences. Each and every one of these pleasures is simply an empty attempt to replace the true joy which only comes from God.

Let's consider what Joy is *not*. Joy is not the same as Happiness. Happiness depends upon circumstances or "happenings." Happiness is an expression of pleasure with outward circumstances. Therefore, when circumstances around us are dark or unpleasant, our happiness fails. Joy is much different. It is the outworking of the Holy Spirit inside of us as he causes us to rejoice more and more in the person and work of Jesus Christ. *Christian Joy is an inward contentment and pleasure in the person of Jesus Christ.*

 1 Thess 5:16. **Q.** When should a Christian rejoice?

 In Philippians 4:4 we see how it is possible to rejoice "evermore." In whom do we rejoice?


¹ C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, p. 170.

Are there hobbies or habits in your life that you may be using as cheap substitutes for the joy that only comes from a close relationship with God? What can you do to seek true, spiritual joy?

Let's consider some of the reasons why we can "rejoice evermore"


Reasons for Rejoicing

1. We Rejoice Because We Are Reconciled


 Rom 5:10-11. **Q.** According to these verses, in whom do we have Joy?

Q. Considering both v10 and 11, why do you think we "joy in God" *through our Lord Jesus Christ*?

2. We Rejoice Because We Have Eternal Life

 Luke 10:20. **Q.** What did Jesus tell his disciples to rejoice in?

3. We Rejoice Because We Will Be Like Christ

 Romans 5:2. **Q.** What did Paul say we rejoice in?

4. We Rejoice In the Character of God

 Rom 5:11. **Q.** In whom do we rejoice? _____

📖 Php 3:3. Q. In whom do we rejoice? _____

📖 Rom 14:17. Q. In whom do we rejoice? _____

☁️ Considering the above reasons for joy, how should our *circumstances* affect our joy?

“ If our joy is found in people, possessions, pursuits or anything other than the promises and person of God it will fail. ”

The above verses name each member of the trinity and state that a Christian should rejoice in each of them. The Christian should have joy in God, through Jesus Christ, because he has reconciled us to himself, has given us the Holy Spirit, promises us eternal life and is making us like Jesus Christ.

In addition to *what God has done for us* we rejoice in *who God is*. God’s promises and His character are the unmovable foundation for our joy. His righteousness, holiness, love, mercy, forgiveness and every other divine attribute should comfort us and cause us to rejoice in Him. Circumstances change but our God is unchanging and our salvation cannot be lost, it is for this reason that we can *rejoice evermore* (1 Thess 5:16).

📖 John 16:22. Q. What can no man take from us?

Real Joy

Ask yourself the question “What do I really take joy in?” If our joy is found in people, possessions, pursuits or anything other than the promises and person of God it will fail.

📖 Ecclesiastes 2:10,11. Solomon sought to find Joy in all the things of earth, including his own labour. What was his conclusion?

Joy is not mere happiness. Joy is not an artificial grin pasted on the face of a Christian. Joy is a deep-seated satisfaction and contentment in the person of Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us. Pleasures, happiness and circumstances all change, but Jesus and His joy are unchanging.


So, why is it important for the Christian to have joy?

The Importance of Joy

1. Joy is Required to Reach the Lost.


Have you ever met a superficial Christian? A great turn-off to those in the world who are seeking answers is that of the phoney Christian who is faking joy. We've all seen the forced smile and semi-enthusiastic tones of the joyless Christian who is feigning the appearance of joy. Joy is not to be manufactured in our lives, it is to be produced by the Spirit and displayed by our countenance, demeanor and reactions. If everything we have seen above is true then the Christian should have a lasting joy which is foreign to this world. This supernatural joy not only enables us to witness with sincerity but it serves as a testimony of our own salvation. The genuine Christian displaying real spiritual joy is a powerful witness to the unsaved world.

In Psalm 51 we read David's prayer to God after his sin with Bathsheba:

 Psalms 51:12. **Q.** David desired the joy of the Lord, what did he indicate would be the result of the restoration of this Joy?


Knowing the gospel message is not enough. If your unsaved friends and family cannot see something different in your life, like the abiding joy of the Lord, it is unlikely that you will be a successful witness.

2. Joy Provides Strength for Service


 Nehemiah 8:10. **Q.** In the book of Nehemiah we read about a great work for the Lord. Nehemiah desired to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. In the midst of this work, the people read and heard the word of God. They wept because of their ignorance and disobedience toward God. In Nehemiah 8:10, he encouraged the people, where did he tell them their strength comes from?


It is the joy of the Lord that will encourage us in His work and strengthen us for service. It comes from the confidence that we are saved, that God is unchanging and that He works all things together for our good (Rom 8:28).


3. Joy is Sustaining Through Sorrow

 John 16:20-22. Every man, woman and child will experience sorrow in their life. In John 16:20, Jesus was preparing his disciples for the great sorrow they would feel after his death. **Q.** What did he say would happen to their sorrow?

Q. v22. What event would cause their sorrow to turn to joy?

 In 2 Corinthians chapter 6 Paul lists many of the troubles he had encountered as an Apostle. Q. According to verse 10, what did he always do, even in the midst of sorrow?

 Heb 12:2. Q. Jesus is our perfect example. According to Heb 12:2 What enabled him to endure the sorrow and suffering of the cross?

 2 Cor 7:4. Q. What was Paul joyful in?

 1 Thess 1:6. Q. In what circumstances did the Thessalonians rejoice?

The Bible says that Jesus was a *man of sorrows* (Isa 53:3), yet it also says he was *anointed with gladness* (Ps 45:7). His example is one of maintaining joy even in sorrow. Our circumstances may rob us of happiness, but they should never rob us of joy. Even when we endure the harshest of times we can rejoice in the God who goes with us through trials. Ultimately, we can look forward to the joy that awaits us in heaven.

**REFLECT
REFLECT**

Do you allow bad circumstances to steal your joy? This is an indication that you are rejoicing in the wrong things. You are relying on your “happenings” to produce joy when all they can really do is produce fleeting happiness.

How to Have Joy

We read in John 15:11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* Jesus spoke the words in the fifteenth chapter of John so that we could have His joy and that His joy would remain. It would make sense then to examine John 15 to find exactly what he has said. It is in this chapter that we find *how to have the joy of the Lord.*

📖 John 15:4. **Q.** What must we do if we want to bear fruit?

“ True joy in God will occur when we are closest to Him. ”

Jesus spoke these words so that his disciples could have fulness of Joy. The joy filled life is one that is spent abiding in Jesus Christ. In the next section we will learn what it means to *abide in him* and to thereby receive His joy.

Joy Through Abiding

Possessing the joy of the Lord is a direct result of our abiding in Christ. To “abide” simply means “to continue, remain or endure.” It speaks of the Christian who remains faithful to Jesus Christ throughout his entire life. We will not rejoice in God, his character and what he has done for us if we are abiding in sin. True joy in God will occur when we are closest to Him. This is what Jesus called “abiding” in Him. So, what does it mean to abide in Him?

1. Full Surrender

📖 John 15:4. **Q.** What did Jesus indicate was the only way for us to bear fruit?

The branch has no life, purpose or ability outside of the vine. Its existent is entirely devoted to the vine. This is the surrendered relationship we must have with Jesus Christ if we are to bear the fruit of joy. Our lack of joy is an indication that we have not surrendered all to our Lord.

REFLECT
REFLECT


Are you fully devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ? A half-hearted devotion to Him will never result in joy.

2. Dependence

📖 John 15:5. **Q.** Abiding in Christ means we do *what* through His power?

In order to have Christ's joy, we must depend entirely on Him. What can a branch do without the vine? Anything we do of any eternal significance will be done by the power of Jesus Christ. We must continually depend upon Him to do anything that is pleasing to God.

3. *Continual Obedience*

 John 15:9-10. **Q.** Here Jesus tells us to *continue in his love*. According to v10, what must we do in order to continue in his love?

Jesus said in John 15, that he spoke these things that we might have joy. In verse 10 he tells us to keep His commandments. Obedience to Christ's commands is directly responsible for producing joy. For this reason, the growing, obedient Christian is a joyous Christian whereas the saved man who struggles with sin also struggles to maintain his joy.

Since joy is dependent upon obedience and not circumstances, we can have joy no matter what troubles we face. In fact, our troubles often drive us closer to God and strengthen our obedience resulting in *increased* joy.

REFLECT
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Have you ever noticed the connection between obedience and joy in your own life? What changes in your life would enable you to experience consistent joy?

Review: Joy

1. How do you think this world defines joy?
2. How is it possible to still have joy in the midst of sorrow?
3. What does it say about us when we allow circumstances to steal our joy?
4. If you had to make a list of the things that contribute to *unchanging* joy, what would you include?
5. Why do you think it's important for us to have the joy of the Lord when we are busy *servicing* Him?
6. How does having joy affect our ability to witness?
7. How does a Christian lose his joy?
8. How does a Christian maintain his joy?