
A Joy Heart and Mind

Where does it come from? How Do I Get It?

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IT IS an interesting fact that this world has no concept of real joy. This is evident by the definition found in a good dictionary. Listen to it: Joy is “a strong feeling of pleasure, gladness and happiness.” Before I go into a Bible description and definition of joy, I would remind you of the main substitutes ~ this world for joy or fulfillment.

Many people are completely dominated by possessions. Thus the reason for both parents working to the neglect of their children. Their conclusion is that with a nice home, automobile and financial security, happiness will be automatic. God’s Word clearly exposes this motivation: “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

The general attitude of most people seems to be, “All the world needs is love.” There is a growing attachment to another human, as though joy will be the result of finding the right person who understands them with tender affection. Try to tell this to a large segment of our society whose marriages have shipwrecked. Much of the immorality of our day stems from to toleration and expectation of finding fulfillment in a relationship, whether it be one night or a few years. Again, the Bible plainly directs in our fellowship with others; but our rejoicing cannot be found in mere human relationships that can change with each misunderstanding. Acceptance by others seems to be high on the priority list for many people. No possibility of joy exists for those who have no desire to please their Creator. God will accept no substitute for the joy He has provided for His children.

Definition of Joy

Joy is a delightful state of the mind as is peace. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee” (Isa. 26:3). It is not found in the possession of something or in a perfect environment. The Hebrew form means “to leap or spin around with pleasure.” The Greek word means “gladness.” Personal possession of joy is from the present and future assurance of goodness being your possession.

Joy is the automatic fruit of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace” (Gal. 5:22). Our expectation produces joy within. “But Christ as a son over his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the REJOICING OF THE HOPE firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:6). God himself is our joy. “Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my EXCEEDING JOY; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God” (Psalms 43:4).

Never forget that Jesus Christ produces our joy and every thought of Him means a rejoicing spirit within us. “That the

trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with JOY unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:7, 8). Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is FULLNESS OF JOY; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalms 16:9-11).

The theme of one of the most wonderful books in the Bible is joy. Philippians is filled with it as you will learn from the remaining references in this message.

Source of Joy

“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and JOY of faith” (Phil. 1:25). Please note the wording “joy of faith.” Here we learn that faith owns, communicates and motivates joy. In faith we recognize the greatness and goodness of God. In the light of such revelation, His glorious provisions of joy is our automatic possession.

Let me insert a few comments about faith. It is not that which we possess or generate. It is the gift of God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9). Faith is communicated through the Word of God. “So then faith, by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). It is not the consequence of laborious effort on our part, nor is it difficult to possess. Faith is not meritorious. God does not keep his promises on the basis of our possession or exercise of it. He does not do something for us because of our action for Him. He keeps His sovereign promise, made independent of any action or merit on our part. Faith is not work; it is ceasing in all self-effort, with an attitude of inability to do what must be done. We rest upon the work of God when we believe the accomplishment of His promises. There is no clearer statement of the exercise of faith than by the Apostle Paul on the deck of a sinking ship: “Wherefore sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

“Yea, and if! be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I JOY, and REJOICE with you all. For the same cause also do ye JOY, and REJOICE with me” (Phil. 2:17,18). Here we learn that Paul’s joy was assisting others in their trust in the Lord. The spiritual level of the people to whom he ministered produced his rejoicing heart.

“I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may REJOICE, and that I may be the less sorrowful” (Phil. 2:28). Epaphroditus was sick unto death, but God spared his life. His dear friends back in Philippi were concerned about him. Their learning of the welfare of a brother in the Lord brought joy to the saints and less sorrow to Paul. Remember, Epaphroditus was deeply concerned about the joy of the people back home. “For he longed after you all, and was full

of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick” (Phil. 2:26).

Other people we love and are concerned about can bring us great joy. We must realize that our ministry can bring rejoicing to others. May God help us to be rejoicing saints, communicating the same to others about us.

Motivation of Joy

“Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with JOY” (Phil. 1:4). Prayer generates joy. Prayer changes things! Prayer changes people! How can we pray, believing God to have His way, and be sorrowful as though God may not bring to pass the right, good, or profitable thing?

“What then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth. Christ is preached; and I therein do REJOICE, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil. 1:18). The message of Jesus Christ produces joy within us. If Christ is our joy, each time He is exalted in a message, we rejoice.

“Holding forth the word of life; that I may REJOICE in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain” (Phil. 2:16). Here Paul faces his final report to the One Who died for him. His joy is the absence of a vain course and labor. Are you fulfilling God’s individual purpose for your life? You know what to do. Your directions are in a Book – the Bible. May God find you ready for that day of accounting; and may the thought of reporting bring you joy in the here and now as well as at that day.

“Finally, my brethren, REJOICE in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Phil. 3:1). Here is the real source of joy. It is the consequence of a position and possession – “in the Lord.” “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and REJOICE in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). If we are not rejoicing in Christ, we can be assured of the possession of confidence in the flesh. What a twisted false conclusion. It is a lie from Satan.

“REJOICE in the Lord always; and again I say, REJOICE” (Phil. 4:4). Note the position of the rejoicing person. “But I REJOICED *in the Lord* greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity” (Phil. 4:10).

The source of our joy is to be *in the Lord*, not in circumstances or environmental factors. There was a man who had tremendous possession. The Bible informs us that the Rich Young Ruler departed from the Saviour. “He went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.” The Lord has spoiled us to find joy in any other person or circumstances other than Himself.

Possession of Joy

“Fulfill ye my JOY, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil. 2:2).

The joy Paul possessed was motivated by the action of others. This joy was his because of the conversion and life in Christ of other people. “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my JOY and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved” (Phil. 4:1). He classified people worked upon by God as his joy.

Paul knew the rejoicing of the people in Philippi would be increased by his coming to them. You could not sit under Paul’s ministry very long without his joy spreading. Now it is their joy. All of it is IN CHRIST JESUS. “That your REJOICING may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again” (Phil. 1:26).

There are assurances in the Bible for unsaved people. They can be assured of the flames of Hell for all eternity. They can be sure of possessing a hard time as transgressors of God’s law. “Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. 13:15). They have no hope of a bright, brilliant future.

Friend, if you are not in Christ, repent of your sins. Name them one by one to the Holy God. Believe Him to keep His Word, to forgive and cleanse you of them. Rest upon His promises to take you to Heaven. Accept by simple faith the gift of eternal life. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Find a place of prayer and talk direct to God and His Son in Whom you desire to abide. You have His promises. Believe Him!

My Christian friend, do not live on a lower plain than God desires for you. Where is joy? Do you possess it, or better still, does genuine joy possess you? This answer is easily detected by all. Where are your investments placed? Your time and energy? What are you doing with your money? What is your most pleasurable investment? If you are Heaven-bound, by the grace of God, I know the answer without your letter. The JOY of the Lord demands fellowship with and obedience to the One who has placed His joy within you.

When you lay this sermon down, why not start practicing “REJOICE in the Lord always”? You do not rejoice in your job, money, or circumstances. God has spoiled you for genuine satisfaction from any other relationship. REJOICE IN THE LORD!

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