



In observing today's world – I observe that people are trying to find joy in shallow relationships, alcohol, drugs, sex, food, vacations, careers, toys, exercising, and money– let's not forget money!

These items can afford happiness to an extent . . . – but, where is the true joy?

Let's consider the JOY that Jesus presented. What was the joy that Jesus had? Joy should not be confused with happiness. In fact, it is an insult to Jesus Christ to use the word *happiness* in connection with Him.

The joy of Jesus was His absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice to His Father- the joy of doing that which the Father sent Him to do- "...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross..." (Hebrews 12:2).

Jesus prayed that our joy might continue fulfilling itself until it becomes the same joy as His.

Joy has more to do with remaining in the presence of Jesus than with avoiding problems and struggles in our lives. John 15, we know that joy is always available to us when we remain in Christ, through whatever life brings.

- Happiness is a state of mind, while joy is a mind-set.
- Happiness comes and goes, while joy can be constant.
- Happiness is dependent, while joy is independent.
- Happiness is conditional, while joy is unconditional.

John drives home the definition of joy in the kingdom of God as having nothing to do with eliminating negative outward circumstances, but rather with embracing them as opportunities to strengthen faith and gain resolve.

Philippians 4:11-13

¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

We can also make peace with the fact that sorrow and joy can coexist together in a heart quite authentically. We don't have to pick one or the other. We can simply have both. And giving ourselves permission to have both is freeing on every level.

We can sit with and tend to - all that still needs to be healed and at the same time laugh, plan for great things ahead, and declare this a glorious day.

To have both isn't denial. It's declarative! It's decisive! It's deeming life a gift ... even if it looks nothing like we thought it would.

Our sorrows tender our heart and allow us to grieve. Our joys tend to our heart's need to get back up and go on.

Let's celebrate all that's worthy of joy while fully allowing sorrow to come to our party as well — knowing there's purpose in the pain and joy in the making of a life with Jesus.

Note the end result of choosing eternal joy - being mature and complete in Christ. Joy becomes the fuel for the believer on this road to maturity. Joy through Jesus is a tank filler! Only Jesus can make our lives flourish in the midst of trouble. In Him, joy is strengthened when life is challenging.

In the final analysis, joy is a regular experience that no Christian can afford to miss. It requires certain disciplines, but they are well worth it. Choosing joy will involve capturing moments of celebration, making music in your heart, discovering the reasons you have for joy (count your blessings), and sometimes telling your emotions that JOY is going to override and win.

Growing as a Christian might best be described as working on our joy and the joy of those around us. That is exactly what Christ was doing in the lives of his disciples and what the Holy Spirit has come to do in us. The fact is one day our final destination will be not only entering into *heaven*. . .but entering into *joy*!



“Daisy” JOY.

Don't Allow Individuals to Source Your JOY!

Don't Allow Individuals to Sabotage Your JOY!

Don't Allow Individuals to Steal Your JOY!

SON is the only source of true JOY.

God's concern is permanent and eternal!

**He does promise us joy and that joy
is built on His presence in our lives!**

**Unlike happiness that needs pursuing,
we don't have to pursue joy.**

**Instead, when we pursue God,
JOY will find us!**

