

Information Regarding the Joy of the Lord

Introduction

- A. Christianity is based upon historical fact as known through the Bible. Therefore the foundation of our life is found in objective truth.
- B. Christianity is also experiential. To be a Christian means, in part, that we are called into a life of fellowship with God (I Corinthians 1:9), knowing the love of God (Ephesians 3:16-20), and experiencing the joy of the Lord (Gal. 5:22,23), all in a growing pattern of life (I Peter 2:2).
- C. The experiential areas of Biblical Christianity are even more difficult to learn than the doctrinal. There are a number of reasons for this -- namely, the resistance of Satan, our natural lethargy, poor models, as well as the thought and emotional patterns that have controlled our life for many years.

I. The Principles Related to the Joy of the Lord.

- A. We must recognize that the experience of the joy of the Lord is a by-product of doing the will of God.

John 15:11 --
John 16:24 --
John 17:13 --
Romans 14:17 --
Romans 15:13 --
Galatians 5: 22,23 --
I John 1:4 --
- B. We must accept the truth that we have the joy of the Lord. According to the former verses it was a gift that accompanied our salvation. It is ours legally.
- C. We must make the necessary decisions to stop living outside the will of God in both action and attitude. Honesty is a necessity here.
 - 1. This may involve confession and restitution.
 - 2. This may involve changes in priority.
 - 3. This may involve changes in attitude.
 - 4. This may involve humbling ourselves to get help

D. We must learn to practice the joy of the Lord by faith.

1. Question: "What would you do if you had the joy of the Lord?"
Answer: "Probably smile more, sing to the Lord, express happiness, be positive in thinking and attitude, and be more involved in the things of God -- because of the joy they bring."
2. We must do this by faith -- whether we feel like it or not.
3. This is not pretending but the practice of the truth. We have learned how to do this concerning the assurance of salvation -- and we can regarding joy.
4. As we practice the truth -- the experience of joy will soon become a part of our life.

II. Observations Regarding the Joy of the Lord.

A. Many times a major hindrance to experiencing the joy of the Lord is found in patterns of attitude and action that are long-standing and ingrained in one's life.

The tendency to neglect reading the Bible and learning how to study the Scriptures.

The tendency to neglect learning how to worship God and to pray.

The tendency to put more value on secondary matters such as sports, home improvement, pleasure, TV, classes, recreation, work, and attending church as a spectator.

The tendency to be negative and skeptical toward life.

B. Probably the most serious hindrance to experiencing the joy of the Lord -- is the way we submit to the tyranny of our emotions.

1. Too often we accept our emotions as our authority for how things really are. So -- if we feel depressed then that is how we believe things are (God has left me, I must have committed some sin) and we accept that as truth.
2. Emotions are important, we must pay attention to them and enjoy them when they are right -- but they have not been given to us as our authority.
 - a. As a rule of thumb -- reject all that is negative and refuse to give in to it.
 - b. Learn to practice the truth regarding faith, love, hope and joy. make practical decisions -- "I refuse to give in to that feeling of discouragement. I will believe God on the basis of His Word and trust Him." Then quote the appropriate Scripture.

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