

Joy, What Is It ?

By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

What is joy: Webster says...*"The emotion brought out by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires. Expression of emotion, bliss, to experience great pleasure of delight."*

I. What Joy Isn't:

A. Joy is not found in physical pleasure.

1. Not found in drinking, drugs, eating, or illicit stimulation.
2. These may bring pleasure for a moment, but not joy.
3. Some of the most miserable people in the world experience physical pleasures every day. They may even fulfill all their fantasies, but it is to no avail, they have great guilt and not joy. Many hollywood stars are most miserable.

B. Not found in pride of possessions, or popularity.

1. Children are quickly dissatisfied with things; they do not give joy. Their wants just increase the more they have, the more they want, wishing for more they try to find satisfaction.
2. Gold-metal winners, the rich and the famous may have many thrills but do not have inner joy.

C. Is not found through laughter, fun, and parties

1. "Eat, drink and be merry," is the desire of mankind. But often laughter, partying is only a cover-up for the lack of joy.
2. Solomon made a diligent search for that which satisfied, for joy.

He did not find it in things, sex, fame, and fortune. He admitted that things in themselves are *all vanity and vexation of spirit*. He found all the world's pleasure offered no joy. They were empty. Often those who have the most are trying to find real joy and purpose in life.

II. Look At People Who Had Joy. Why Were They Joyous?

A. Jesus had joy in the midst of great sorrow.

1. There is no record of Christ laughing, but much about his sorrows, heavy heart, tears, moved to anguish, etc.
2. Consider: Isa. 63:9; Isa. 53:4; Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14; 15:32;
23:37; Lk 19:41; Jh. 11:34-36; Heb. 4:15
3. Jesus was a *"man of sorrows,"* (Isa 53) People laughed at him, mocked, spit upon, etc. True joy cannot be conquered by sorrow. Those who have joy will not escape sorrow, but will have joy regardless of it. Jesus had joy in the midst of scorn and rejection.

Men laughed at Christ, look down upon Him, yet in spite of it He had joy. (Isa 53:3) Joy cannot be conquered by rejection. And joy does not depend on acceptance or popularity.

4. Christ had joy in the midst of horrible suffering. (Heb. 12:2)

Even in the midst of extreme agony and suffering on the Cross, the beatings before, the crown of thorns, the nails -- He had joy and it was that JOY that kept Him on the cross for us. He had joy over the anticipation of what His death would bring. (Jude 24) Joy is not selfish, nor does it have glee in winning. His joy was a joy centered in our benefit for it was love running over.

III. What, Then, Is Joy?

A. Looking at the life of Christ, joy is:

1. An inner condition of the spirit.
2. An inner condition of the heart, and thinking.
3. Based on a right relationship with God.
4. Based on a right relationship with other people.
5. Based on a genuine love for other people.
6. Expresses itself in praise and thanksgiving.

B. Joy is the exultation of my spirit as a result of genuine harmony with God and with man.

C. Its Antonym and Synonym:

1. Antonym:

It is griping, and complaining; It is a people who are always finding fault or criticizing others and therefore have no true joy. Their eyes are on things, events, circumstances and situations of life rather than on Christ and His Word.

2. Synonym:

It is praise and thanksgiving. (Psa. 103:1-3) Those who will humble themselves and will give praise and gratitude for all things from God and others will have joy.

3. It comes from God: (Neh. 8:10)

- a. Psa 4:7; 30:11; 45:7; Ezra 6:22; Eccl. 2:26
- b. It is a from a work of cleansing, (John 15:1-3)
- c. It comes from confession and a fierce desire to forsake sin. (Psa 51)
- d. It comes from submission and meditation, (Matt 11:29)
- e. It comes from a walk in the Spirit, and not the flesh. (Eph. 5:16--24)
- e. It comes from obeying God, on our knees seeking Him. (Jh 15:10)

We can become like Jesus based upon our focus. Let's focus upon our Heavenly Father as Christ did. **And let's look "unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith."** (Heb. 12:1)