

Joy

When Jesus spoke about our joy and His joy in John 15:11, He reflected back to verse 10 to let us know what will produce that joy. Joy is our portion when we keep His commandments and abide in His love - "just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love."

In these verses and others we begin to understand that joy as defined biblically is not happiness and does not depend on our circumstances.

Oswald Chambers says: "The joy of Jesus was the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to His Father -- the joy of doing that for which the Father sent Him to do." This helps us to understand why Hebrews 12:2 says, "Jesus -- who for the joy set before Him endured the cross."

Paul in Acts 20:22-24 states: "the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me -- But none of these things move me; neither do I esteem my life dear to myself, if only I may finish my course with joy."

Over and over in God's Word we learn that joy comes from obeying God and having a right relationship with Him. There can be joy in the midst of the most difficult circumstances when we allow God by the power of His Spirit to keep our hearts pure and right.

Some examples:

Trials - James 1:2 Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials -(why?) - trials perfect us - vs. 3,4

Death to self - John 3:29,30. This then is my pleasure and joy and it is now complete. He must increase but I must decrease.

Forgiven sin - Ps. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of my salvation.

When the lost repent - Luke 15:7 I tell you there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Gal. 5:22 reminds us that joy is a fruit of the Spirit. True and lasting fruit is produced by abiding in Christ and walking in His love and presence - Ps. 16:11b - in Your presence is fullness of joy. Joy is an evidence of the Kingdom of God within, as expressed in Romans 14:17. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy. Joy then is produced by three things:

1. The forgiveness of sin which reminds us of the importance of daily heart examination and repentance. (Ps. 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Clean me from hidden and unconscious faults)
2. Walking in a close relationship with God, maintained through living according to the precepts of the Word. (Ps. 119:133 Direct my foot steps according to Your Word, let no sin rule over me.)
3. Keeping our heart in the path of obedience to His will for our lives (John 14:15 If you love Me, you will obey what I command.)

Jesus had joy because he fulfilled God's will for Him. Our joy is complete as we fulfill God's design for us.

When we are filled with His joy as a result of our close relationship with our Lord and walking in obedience to Him, our joy will be observed by others. The world will see the joy and marvel.

Be filled with His joy: unspeakable and full of glory! (I Peter 1:8)