

IF YOU WANT JOY

There is such a push today for entertainment – FUN – we feel we must have extensive and expensive vacations – Disney World, Cruises, and Overseas Travel – but when it is over all we have left is nothing but pictures and memories which soon get packed away in light of the “Next Adventure” – while still paying for this latest one.

King Solomon puts it this way, *“Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom – but a man of understanding walks upright”* (Proverbs 15:21).

We can find the answer to this longing of our hearts in an old Chorus, *“If you want Joy, Real Joy, Wonderful Joy – Let Jesus come into your heart.”* It goes on to say, *“Your sins He’ll wash away, your night He’ll turn to day, your life He’ll make it over anew,”* and after all, this is exactly what we really need, even if we don’t realize it immediately.

The Apostle John writes, after encouraging his fellow disciples in the things of the Lord, *“These things I write to you, that your Joy might be full”* (1 John 1:4). And the Apostle Peter also encourages us concerning Jesus Christ, *“Whom having not seen, you Love, in whom, though now you see Him not, yet Believing, you Rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory”* (1 Peter 1:8).

There are times when our hearts are so full and overflowing with the Joy of the Lord that it is hard to explain. Suffice to say that when the Lord gives us His Joy, Assurance of Salvation and Peace in our heart, it is often difficult to express in words.

The Apostle Luke records it this way, *“There is Joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that Repents”* (Luke 15:10). There is Joy for the repentant sinner, there is Joy for those responsible for him hearing the Good News, and there is Joy in Heaven over one more coming to the knowledge of Salvation and sins forgiven.

In the Old Testament we read, *“The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come singing – and everlasting Joy shall be upon them – and they shall obtain gladness and Joy – and sorrow and mourning shall flee away”* (Isaiah 51:11).

Another old Chorus – *“There is Joy in serving Jesus,”* expresses the Joy we receive in sharing our faith with others. It need not be professional or profound, it need not be formal or word perfect – simply, as the Lord said, *“You shall be witnesses”* and He prefaces that statement with, *“you shall receive Power”* (Acts 1:8). In other words, we are not alone in this matter of sharing the Good News with others – it is He who gives the opportunity, it is He who gives the words, it is He who gives all we need – IF, we are willing to allow Him to use us.

If you have attended Church with any regularity in the past I’m sure you have sung at one time or another the old hymn, *“I surrender all, all to Him I give”* – the question is –

Have you really meant what you were singing? Too often we sing commitment prayers in Church, led by the song leader or pastor, without really thinking of the words, and in the process promising God all sorts of things. Think of the words next time you participate in singing in a Worship Service!

Paul the Apostle tells the Church at Philippi, "*Rejoice in the Lord always – and again I say, Rejoice*" (Philippians 4:4). If you are a Joyful, Rejoicing person it will reflect in everything you do – it will be contagious – and others will respond. Greet everyone you pass with a hearty "Good Morning," a smile on your face, and watch their reaction. Yes, some will ignore you and think you're strange – but many will respond positively and in the process you could make a real difference in their (and your own) day.

There is too much negativism today. People are carrying heavy loads of worry and care and are bogged down with loads they should not be bearing. Some are self-inflicted by over-use of credit cards, some by making improper rash decisions, some by past events in their lives leaving scars of guilt. Don't despair – there is hope – Jesus stands beside you, willing to forgive and give hope and guidance – IF we will simply confess our past transgressions and ask Him for His help.

One of the most encouraging verses in the Bible in this matter is 1 John 1:9 – "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Herein lies the path to real Joy – forgiveness of the past, assurance of help in the present, and a future of Jesus Christ walking with us all the way.

Trust Him Today! – He will NEVER Fail! – Joy and Victory is Guaranteed!

An acronym of real JOY tells it all for success and contentment in Life – By Serving –

J – Jesus
O – Others
Y – Yourself

TRY IT – IT REALLY WORKS!

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