

## "REJOICE ALWAYS!"

### 1 Thessalonians 5:16

#### **Big Idea: God's Word says that it is possible to always be rejoicing!**

Is this verse in the Bible a statement or a command. What tense is the verb?  
Imperative.

Why is this so hard for us? We see it in our our daily living. It even carries over into our worship - (like lack of enthusiasm in singing, reluctance in testifying, and praising God publicly.. How come many Christians don't seem to have joy in their lives?

First, we need to make sure that we understand what "joy" really is.

#### **1. What does the Bible mean by joy?**

In the Greek language, the most common word for joy is "chara"... which means "joy, delight, gladness" (Vines)

It is closely related to charis (grace) and charisma (gift)

a. "We might like to think of charis and charisma as that which produces joy; and chara as the response to a gift which is given." (Denny Diehl)

definition found in the Zondervan Topical Bible for joy: "the emotion excited by expectation or acquisition of good"

#### **2. What is the relationship between joy and a gift?**

Understanding the close relationship between joy and gift allows us to appreciate a very important principle. We have or show joy in direct response to the value of the gift received! The greater the value we place on some gift, the greater our joy when received . To illustrate, imagine your reaction to three different gifts: 1) The gift of a penny (ho hum) 2) The gift of a hundred dollars (now that's really nice) 3) The gift of a new house (wow! that's fantastic!) Do you see

how the response or emotion of joy is in direct proportion to our evaluation of the gift received?

### **3. What has God given to us?**

James 1:17

It's easier to list the things God HASN'T given us!

“Every good perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows.” James 1:17

The most valuable gift God has given us is eternal life! - Romans 6:23

Including freedom from the condemnation for sin, through Jesus' blood! (Rom. 8:1)

Also, fellowship with God as we go through this life! And the certainty of everlasting life with God after this life! –the great value of this gift should produce great joy?

It did for the Ethiopian eunuch! - cf. Ac 8:38-39 But, many Christians who possess this great gift are not as joyful as they should be.

Why is that? Perhaps one reason is this...

### **4. Why some do not realize the magnitude of sin!**

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to spend!

WHAT SIN DOES...

How it separates us from God -

Isaiah 59:1-2 “...the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”

How it can condemn us to spiritual death and hell –

Romans 6:23 “...wages of sin is death...gift of God is eternal life”

“Wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God.” Psalm 9:17

Revelation 21:8 “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Why is this? Perhaps we look at sin from the world's point of view: a. "Sin is not all that bad" or, "It is only a violation of human relationships, which we can easily correct by saying 'I'm sorry'"

Instead, we should be looking at it from God's point of view: a. Just one sin makes a person guilty of all! –

Ja 2:10-11 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Sin is a spiritual virus that infected everyone! - Romans 3:23 . Sin is so terrible, God had to send His Only Begotten Son to die for our sins! Until we realize the terribleness of sin, we won't appreciate the salvation from sin which God offers. And that leads us to perhaps the main reason why most Christians lack joy.

## **5. Why do some people not realize the magnitude of worth of God's gift?**

**We don't appreciate what Jesus has done!**

**He has reconciled us back to a loving fellowship with God! –**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NLT All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him.

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

In Christ, all things have become new! - 2 Co 5:17

Why don't many Christians "get it?"

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." - John 15:11

"And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." - 1 Jn 1:4

John wrote, and Jesus spoke, about things designed to give us fullness of joy!

Many Christians never take the time to contemplate and understand... What Jesus taught or what His apostles wrote. **All of these are found in the Bible.**

If we did, I believe we would appreciate... The terribleness of our sin and the magnitude of the gift of salvation in Christ!

Instead, we allow ourselves to more influenced by the world and its standards so that we value material things over spiritual things. So that we have and show more joy over receiving things like... A new job, promotion, raise or a new house, car a husband, wife, or children ...than we do over receiving the gift of salvation from sin! There's nothing wrong with rejoicing over material gifts; indeed, we should be thankful. But if we are not as joyful over our spiritual gifts, we need to retrain our thinking through the Word of God!

## **6. Why are some Christians not more joyful outwardly?**

### **They're afraid of the danger in emotionalism...**

Emotionalism is where emotions rule instead of the Word of God. It is often a "better felt than told" kind of religion. Where people depend more on what they feel in their heart rather than basing their beliefs and actions on what the Bible says. Such emotionalism often manifests itself in worship that is characterized by disorderly outbreaks of emotion. Contrary to what is ordained in 1 Co 14:40.

### **There is also a danger in the other extreme...**

Of resorting to "dead formalism." In which little or no emotion is shown. Whether in our singing, or in offering an "amen" to our prayers -- Worship which does not involve the heart is just as wrong!

"A man walks into a worship assembly. The preacher is eloquently expressing God's love for us, and the man says 'Amen!' That draws a few stares and whispers of 'Who is that?' The preacher goes on to state that Jesus died for our sins so that we can go to heaven and the man says 'Alleluia.' Again more stares and questions. Finally, the preacher states that through Jesus we may have eternal life, and the man says 'Praise the Lord!' Everyone is looking now, and

one fellow goes over to the newcomer to inform him, 'We don't praise the Lord here.'"

The opposite of that extreme is the preacher who felt like their services needed to be livened up a bit, they were too dead and dull. So he asked his board members to all sit on the front pew, and he told them he would have a bag of beans on the pulpit, whenever he hit one of them on the head with a bean, they should shout "Amen" or "Praise the Lord." They agreed, and next Sunday when he started preaching they did it.... All went well until the whole row of men started shouting at one time. Finally, the preacher hollered, "Shut up you fools, the bag broke!"

#### THERE CAN BE BOTH JOY AND ORDERLY WORSHIP!

There is room for "Amens" and "Praise the Lord!" when offered with sincerity and in keeping with what is said. In reacting to one extreme, let's not go to the other and take away the joy of being a Christian!

"Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God." - Joel 2:23

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" - Psalm 122:1 .

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" - Philippians 4:4

Sadly, many Christians enter the worship of our Creator and Savior with the enthusiasm and vigor of those filling their income tax returns on April 14th! This should not be! And if it is... We need to pray the prayer of David: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..." - Psalm 51:12

Let the Word of God to do its work:

"Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts." - Jeremiah 15:16

If we would spend time with the Word of God, we would learn that we also have been called of God... Called out of sin and its consequences. Called into a wonderful relationship with God and Jesus Christ, where all can be made new!

With such a knowledge of God's great gift, joy is a natural reaction and also a wonderful blessing:

"Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, And in Your righteousness they are exalted." (Psalm 89:15-16)

Don't you want that joy? Then understand and accept the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord!



