

Week of June 14, 2009
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Monday

Neh. 8:10 Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Little is said in the Scriptures about 'happiness'. A great deal is said about 'joy'. This is an important distinction. Happiness is fleeting and circumstantial. Joy is lasting and remains even when circumstances are difficult. Happiness is generated from circumstances outside us. Joy flows from the inside out. Happiness often is bought at the expense of others. Joy flows to the good of others. Are you pursuing the happiness of this world or the Joy of the Lord. The pursuit of happiness often leaves us empty, but the deep joy of the Lord is strength and health. Many lives are ruined in the pursuit of 'happiness', but many are healed in the joy of the Lord.

Tuesday

Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...

Like 'agape' love, joy is not something that can be worked up but instead is brought about by the Holy Spirit's reign in our lives. The lack of joy in your life should be motivating, but should not merely motivate you to pursue joy but rather to pursue Jesus' lordship in every part of your life. This fruit of the Spirit cannot be manufactured by you or experienced apart from the Spirit's work in you. You do not find it by pursuing it, but by pursuing Him. He is the source, the root, and the supply. "Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad." (1Chronicles 16:10)

Wednesday

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.

God's word reminds us that joy is possible in spite of our circumstances. Paul and Silas sang joyously though in prison. James considered tribulation a source of joy. One sure sign that you are walking in the Spirit's control is a joy filled heart in days of trouble. One sure sign that you need more fully to submit to the Lordship of Jesus is the absence of joy in your present circumstance. God is not condemning you in your lack of joy, but encouraging you to look more fully to Him, submit more completely to His control, trust in His love and power. "God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love Him..." (Romans 8:28)

Thursday

1Th. 2:20 For you are our glory and joy.

Where does joy abound? In the work and ministry of the Lord. Earthly pursuits will fade. The honor of men is fleeting. Professional accomplishments of yesterday give way to "what have you done for me today." But the work of the Lord in the lives of others and in the ministry of the Kingdom lasts forever: a source of joy and delight. Money given to the Lord can never be lost. Time given to the Lord is multiplied in eternity. Ministry in the life of another for the Lord - that's joy.

Friday

3 John 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

Obedience to God's will as revealed in God's word is the source of joy. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit's control of our life. So, there is joy for the wife who is a godly wife flowing from her obedience to the Lord and for a husband who is a godly husband. There is joy for the Christian who submits himself/herself to attitudes of grace. There is joy for you *to the extent that you submit yourself* to the word of God. You say, "but..." There is no place for "but" here. Walk in obedience to His truth and know the joy of the Lord.