

Melva's Corner



'How To Keep Your Joy'

November 12, 2007

Central Truth: Joy is more an attitude than a circumstance and a healthy mind-set toward life is rooted in loving and being loved.

"How's it going?"

Is this just small talk, a serious question, or a genuine greeting? And how do we answer? Do we give people what they want to hear, "Fine, and you?" "Great!" "Hi." Or do we share the facts with them? "I'm feeling lousy, had the flu, and been coughing my head off." "Not that great, I'm behind in my bills, the kids are sick and my spouse is really mad at me."

What situations do you let steal your joy?

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) This scripture is a good benchmark to measure your Christian walk? I haven't gotten perfect "10's" yet! Notice joy is second to love. So how do we keep the joy that God wants us to have and share with others? How do we keep our joy when our relationship with others is not going the way we want it to go?

The first way to keep our joy is to encourage one another through our tests in life. Have you ever had a cheerleader? You know, the person that lets you know they are pulling for you. A cheerleader says things like, "You can do it . . . Keep up the good work . . . I like the way you do that!" Paul tells the church of the Thessalonians to be encouragers, **"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)** You love those phrases of encouragement don't you; my bet is others would love to hear them from you as well.

The second way to keep our joy is to put a different spin on our setbacks. I say this not to minimize the great obstacles that sometime block our way, but to reexamine the way we look at problems. **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its works so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4)** Wow, now that’s a different spin on setbacks.

In that scripture, James is saying that whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for growth and joy. That setback can help your endurance to be more fully developed, and then you will be strong in character and ready to face anything in the future. Ever question a setback God allowed to happen to you, only to find out later that your maturity and spirituality levels grew deeper? God may be calling you to a higher level of maturity and spirituality for your relationship to move to deeper intimacy.

The third way to keep our joy is to pray. Hopefully, the most important relationship to you is with God. Any relationship involves an investment in time. Listen to this investment, **“Keep on praying, no matter what happens . . .” (I Thessalonians 5:17-18)** What is ironic is the verse right before this one is **“Always be joyful.”** They literally go together.

Joy in relationships and life are very hard to find some days. We’re almost programmed by advertisers to be dissatisfied with everything so we will want to buy something new to fix our frustration. Finding God’s joy is the one great antidote.

Joy is more an attitude than a circumstance and a healthy mind-set toward life is rooted in loving and being loved.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, **“What lies behind us and what lies in front of us pales in comparison to what lies within us.”** In other words no matter how bad our past was, no matter how troublesome our future may be, we have the Spirit of God within us and that is a wellspring of joy for the days ahead. So resist those things that steal our joy by encouraging those we love, by being our own spin doctor and by praying with thanksgiving! If we’ll do this, we’ll not only add more joy to our life, but also have joy to share with those we love.

My Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for saving me from sin, death and futility. Thank you for giving me the assurance, through your Holy Spirit, that I can come before you with exuberant and overflowing joy. Your love and grace have not only given me hope but have made me your child. Hear my heart and be blessed by my songs of praise. In the name of Jesus I pray and will shout your praise forever and ever. Amen.

Scriptural References:

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11)