



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 7: The Choice to Rejoice

Last week:

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

- ❖ In order to love, we need to experience God's love for us
 - ❖ If I do not feel loved, then it is difficult for me to give love
- ❖ Forgive those who have hurt you
- ❖ Think loving thoughts
 - ❖ Look beyond peoples faults and see their needs
- ❖ Act in love
 - ❖ Choose to love others (whether you feel like it or not)
- ❖ Expect the best, even of those who do not love you

Today's Lesson:

- ❖ Today's lesson is titled "The Choice to Rejoice"
- ❖ We will be discussing the fruit of the Spirit we know as "Joy"
 - ❖ We have hope – Rom 5:1-2
 - ❖ God has purpose for our lives – Rom 5:3
 - ❖ God is with us – Isa 43:1-2; Rom 5:11
 - ❖ We need a Spiritual work out
 - ❖ Memory verse

“I want to be happy”

- ❖ If you ask people today what their #1 ambition in life is, many will tell you: “I want to be happy”.
- ❖ We have this idea that we are supposed to be happy all the time.
- ❖ If we aren't happy, we think we should fake it.
- ❖ The fact is that not every day is a perfect 10.
- ❖ Not everything works out the way we want it to.

Stay positive when things go bad...

- ❖ It's easy to be happy when everything is going your way, so how can we stay positive in a negative world?
- ❖ How can we remain optimistic when everything is falling apart?
- ❖ This is where joy comes in:
 - ❖ Gal 5:22 – But the fruit of the Spirit is ... joy, ... NIV
 - ❖ Phil 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! NIV

“Joy” is different

- ❖ The root of the word “happiness” is “hap”, which means luck or circumstance.
- ❖ Joy is different.
 - ❖ It goes deeper.
 - ❖ Joy is an attitude, it is a choice.
 - ❖ Joy is not dependent on circumstance.
- ❖ You can choose, regardless of the circumstances, to be joyful.
- ❖ When we learn to choose joy, we enhance our lives.
- ❖ As a Christians, we should be the most positive people in the world. Why?



Romans 5:1-5



- ❖ 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. NIV

#1 – We have hope!

- ❖ “We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (vs 2).
- ❖ This is the result of experiencing the grace of God (vs 2).
- ❖ No situation (circumstance) is hopeless!
- ❖ Christians have hope.
- ❖ Don’t base your hope on the wrong thing:
 - ❖ Appearance; a job; money; etc.
- ❖ These are temporary and will pass away.
- ❖ Joy is impossible without hope.
 - ❖ Rom 12:12 – Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
NIV


#2 – God has a purpose

- ❖ God has a purpose for our lives.
- ❖ “We also rejoice in our sufferings” (vs 3).
- ❖ Sufferings – physical or psychological distress; anything that puts us under pressure.
 - ❖ Trials; troubles; problems, etc.
- ❖ Joy is learning to enjoy life in spite of our problems.
- ❖ Joy is not the absence of suffering; but knowing that God is present.

“In” our sufferings

- ❖ Notice that the Spirit says “in” our sufferings.
- ❖ He did not say “because of”.
- ❖ This does not mean that we enjoy suffering. We rejoice in it!
- ❖ We know that suffering has a purpose behind it.
- ❖ God allows the circumstances in our lives.
- ❖ Our perspective in those circumstances determines how we react to them.
- ❖ We rejoice even in tough times because we have hope!

Question:

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- ❖ What does our suffering produce?
 - ❖ Suffering produces perseverance. (vs 3)
 - ❖ Perseverance – The ability to handle pressure.
 - ❖ And perseverance produces character. (vs 4)
 - ❖ Character – Proven reliable.
 - ❖ And character produces hope. (vs 4)
 - ❖ Hope – Confidence in Christ's power and God's promises.
 - ❖ Problems are there by design to increase hope.
 - ❖ There is purpose behind our problems.

James 1:2-4



- ❖ 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
NIV

The right attitude

- ❖ Perseverance, character and hope are produced only when we choose the right attitude.
- ❖ vs 2 – When you experience trials, the correct attitude is Joy!
- ❖ When we learn to rejoice in the problem (not for it, but in it), God uses the circumstances in our lives for good.
- ❖ vs 3 – “because you know” tells us that our response to the trial is a matter of perspective (how you think about it).
- ❖ vs 4 – “so that you may be mature” tells us that this is all part of spiritual growth.

Isa 43:1-2

- ❖ 1 But now, this is what the LORD says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. NIV



#3 – God is with us

- ❖ vs 1 – we belong to God
 - ❖ He has redeemed us; He called us; and we are his.
- ❖ vs 2 – God is with us
 - ❖ We can be joyful in any circumstance because God is with us.
- ❖ Remember that Jesus was called “Immanuel”
 - ❖ Isa 7:14 The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. NIV
 - ❖ Matt 1:23 “they will call him Immanuel”-which means, “God with us.” NIV
- ❖ God has reconciled us to Him through Jesus.
 - ❖ Rom 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. NIV
- ❖ We are His friends, and His friendship last forever.

Question:

❖ Why is joy so elusive to us?

- ❖ The very things that produce joy are contrary to our culture. Our culture tells us to:
 - ❖ Live for yourself;
 - ❖ Forget about others;
 - ❖ Have it your way.
- ❖ The Lord has told us that joy comes from:
 - ❖ Being grateful;
 - ❖ Giving of our time and possessions;
 - ❖ Knowledge of Christ.

Develop a Spiritual Workout (1-2)

- ❖ Joy (or any of the fruits of the Spirit), is like a muscle. If we do not use it, it does not develop.
- ❖ So we need a “Spiritual work out” in order to produce fruit.
- ❖ First – Develop an attitude of gratitude.
 - ❖ 1 Thes 5:18 - give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NIV
- ❖ Second – Cultivate inner joy by giving.
 - ❖ Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' NIV

Develop a Spiritual Workout (3-4)

- ❖ Third – Develop inner joy through service.
 - ❖ Eph 6:7-8 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. NIV
- ❖ Fourth – Share Christ with others.
 - ❖ Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." NIV
- ❖ Practicing these four steps will develop joy in side of you.
- ❖ More importantly, joy grows in you as a result of these actions.

Closing thoughts:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...”

- ❖ Joy is not the same thing as happiness.
 - ❖ Joy is an attitude, it is a choice.
 - ❖ Joy is not dependent on circumstance.
- ❖ You can choose, regardless of the circumstances, to be joyful.
- ❖ We rejoice even in tough times because we have hope!
- ❖ Problems are there by design to increase hope.
- ❖ When you experience trials, the correct attitude is Joy!
- ❖ We can be joyful in any circumstance because God is with us.



Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
NIV

Memory verse: John 15:4