

The Secret to a Joyful Life Part 1

“He was the son of a saloon operator but once he was saved, he became what many consider to be the greatest evangelist of all time. He was saved in 1733 and shortly afterwards entered Oxford University, where he fellowshipped with the John and Charles Wesley.

His ministry began with his preaching in jails to the prisoners and doing missionary work in the colony of Georgia. Soon he traveled to Scotland, Wales, and seven more times to America where thousands were saved.

It is said that his voice could be heard at a range of one mile without amplification and that his oratorical powers were such that he could make an audience weep with just his pronunciation.

His crowds were the greatest ever assembled to hear the preaching of the gospel before the days of amplification and before the days of advertising. In fact, his open-air preaching reached as many as 100,000 people in one gathering!

And often as many as 500 people at a time would fall and lay prostrate on the ground under the power of a single sermon and people were saved right during the progress of the service. In one service alone, 10,000 people were saved.

He preached more than 18,000 sermons at an average of 500 a year, or ten a week. All in all, at a time when travel was extremely primitive, it is estimated that he preached to a total of ten million people.

On a balcony not far from his deathbed, he preached his last message to more than 2,000 people and died within an hour after extending the invitation. What a way to go! His name of course was, George Whitefield.”

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say ol' **George**

Whitefield had a pretty cool life as a Christian, you know what I'm saying?

In fact, so much so that I'd say **now that** is A Life Worth Living For, amen?

But that's right folks, as we've been seeing, **we've got a problem**. You see, even though God's the same God and we're just as much His children as George Whitefield is, most Christians read the Bible in one hand and take a look at their life in the other and say, "Man, something's missing here. Something doesn't match, something's not right. What's going on? Why do these people like George Whitefield get to have an amazing walk with Jesus Christ and here I am keep fumbling around in the dark? I don't have a life worth living for. I've got a life worth giving up!"

Oh, but people, once again, I'm here to tell you this is the great news. It doesn't have to be that way! That kind of life, a life worth living for, like George Whitefield had, **is available to every to every single Christian!** And that's exactly why we're going to continue in our study entitled, "**A Life Worth Living For.**" And what we're doing is taking a look at **4 different keys** that I believe are absolutely pivotal if we're ever going to have that amazing walk with Christ like George Whitefield had.

And we've already seen that **first key** to having **A Life Worth Living For** is when you and I finally learn **The Secret to a Worshipful Life** not a cry baby whiny complaining life. And there we saw four harmful affects of a life of complaining in that **It Affects You, It Affects Others, It Affects the Gospel**, and last time we saw how **It** even **Affects God** because when you

whine and complain, you're in essence saying God is wrong and Satan is right, which is an utter blasphemy and should never come out of the mouth of a Christian, if that is, you want **A Life Worth Living For**.

But that's right folks, **The Secret to a Worshipful Life** is not the only key we need to learn if we're ever going to have those **Lives Worth Living For**. The **second key** that will unlock that **Life Worth Living For** is when you and I finally learn **The Secret to a Joyful Life**. And I call it a "secret" because has anybody noticed how our society today is **constantly looking** for some sort of quick fix solutions to all their problems? I mean, think about it. Nobody wants to take the time or effort to discover where **true Biblical joy** comes from and instead they'd rather pay any price or pop any pill just so they can be happy. In fact folks, it getting so bad, they've now come out with some supposed **new miracle drugs** out there that are supposed to get rid of all our problems, just like that? Let's take a look.

- DIRECTRA – A dose of this drug given to men before leaving on car will cause them to stop and ask for directions when they got lost.
- PROJECTEROL – Men given this experimental new drug were far more likely to actually finish a household repair project before starting a new one.
- COMPLIMENTAFEN – In clinical trials, men were actually able to notice that their wives had a new hairstyle.
- BUYAGRA SUPRESSANT– Upon taking this drug, women were reported to be able resist any and all shopping urges no matter how good the sale was.

- EXTRA-STRENGTH SPORTACON - This drug had the strange effect of making men want to turn off televised sports and actually converse with other family members.
- LIDICILLIN – This drug caused men to lower toilet seats without even having to be told.
- ANTIBOYOTICS – When administered to teenage girls, this drug is highly effective in improving grades, freeing up phone lines, and reducing money spent on make-up.
- ST. MOM’S WORT – A plant extract that treats mom’s depression by rendering preschoolers unconscious for up to six hours a day.
- ANTI-TALKSIDENT – A spray carried in a purse or wallet to be used on anyone too eager to share their life stories with total strangers.
- NAGAMET – When administered to a husband, this drug provides the same irritation as nagging on him all weekend long, saving the wife the time and trouble of doing it herself.

Now how many of you guys would actually be tempted to buy one of those new miracle drugs? I think we all would. **But here’s my point.** Deep down inside, we all know we can’t buy happiness, but that doesn’t keep us from trying does it? And folks, this is because many people, even Christians, don’t realize that the Bible promises something much better than happiness. It’s **called joy**. You see, worldly happiness is a temporary excitement that’s based on external circumstances. But Biblical joy is a **permanent gladness** regardless of external circumstances. And folks, this kind of joy is not only free for the asking, but available to any and all who would call upon the Lord. **That’s the secret! The Secret to a Joyful Life!** But don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s.

John 15:5-11 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

Now folks, according to our text, it’s pretty clear. Jesus declares to you and I that when we simply **come to Him** and remain in Him and His love that **He personally** gives us His what? **His joy**, right? **Why?** So that our joy may be **complete**. In fact, the Greek literally says, “to be made full or filled to the top.”

So I ask you the question Christian. “How are you doing? Are you filled to the top with joy of the Lord? Or are you still scraping the bottom looking for happiness?” And folks, maybe it’s just me, but I think it’s pretty obvious. The face of most Christians today looks like they’ve been sucking lemons eating sour pickles and prunes!

Therefore, if we’re going to learn **The Secret to a Worshipful Life**, I’d say we better look some ways we get tricked and seduced into seeking a temporary happiness instead of Biblical joy, how about you? And people,

it's pretty clear. The **first way** we get tricked and seduced into missing out on **A Joyful Life** is by **Seeking Happiness in Things Instead of Joy from the King**.

And the **1st thing** we're tempted to find happiness in is **Perfect Comforts**. You see, here's how it works. Instead of receiving a permanent joy in Christ, this world tempts you and I to look for a temporary happiness all the **new frills** that life has to offer, via **material products**. For instance, we say, "I'll be happy **when** I get that **new car**." But pretty soon that new car smell fades away. And guess what? Your happiness fades away too. So then we say, "I'll be happy **when** I get that **new wardrobe**." But eventually that new wardrobe wears out. And guess what? Your happiness wears out too. So then we say, "I'll be happy **when** I get that **new house**." But sooner or later that new house starts falling apart. And guess what? Your happiness falls apart too.

People of God, wake up! There's nothing wrong with being happy about a new car, or new wardrobe, or even a new house. Go ahead and enjoy them. But just don't make the mistake of placing your joy **in them**. Why?

Because **Perfect Comforts** never last forever.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle

barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation.”

People of God, the Bible is clear. Comforts come and comforts go, and so does trying to find happiness in them. But if you **seek joy in the Lord**, you’ll be able to rejoice, even if all the crops and cows have been taken away. And so I ask you, “Which would you rather have?”

Oh but that’s not all. The **second thing** we’re tempted to find happiness in is in a **Perfect Future**. You see, instead of receiving a permanent joy in Christ, this world tempts you and I to look for a temporary happiness in a **fortunate vocation**. For instance, we often say, “I’ll be happy **when** I get that **new raise**.” But it doesn’t take long for that new raise to get eaten up by new bills. And guess what? Your happiness gets eaten up too. So then we say, “I’ll be happy **when** I get that **new job**.” But sometimes you leave one job with one bad boss only to discover that the new job now has two who are dragging you down. And guess what? Your happiness gets dragged down too.

People of God, wake up! There’s nothing wrong with being happy about a new raise, or even a new job. Go ahead and enjoy them. But just don’t make the mistake of placing your joy **in them**. Why? Because **Perfect Futures** never last forever.

James 4:13-14 “Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city and spend a year there and carry on our business and make money. Yet you do not know the least thing about what may happen tomorrow. What is the nature of your life? You are really but a wisp of vapor a puff of smoke, a mist that is visible for a little while and then disappears into thin air.”

People of God, the Bible is clear. We don't even know if we're going to be alive tomorrow let alone even go to work. And to some of us, that might come as a big relief. But folks the point is, if you keep **projecting** your happiness in a new future, you might very well find that your future has disappeared into thin air. That's why employment comes and employment goes, and so does trying to find happiness in them. But if you **seek joy in the Lord**, you'll be able to rejoice, even if your vocation never changes. And so I ask you, “Which would you rather have?”

Oh, but that's still not all. The **3rd thing** we're tempted to find happiness in is a **Perfect Trip**. You see, instead of receiving a permanent joy in Christ, this world tempts you and I to look for a temporary happiness in a **fancy vacation** or a **fabulous move**. For instance, we often say, “I'll be happy **when** I can go on a **new vacation** like Disney Land or the Bahamas.” But if you're anything like me, Mickey Mouse starts to get on your nerves after awhile. And sailing to the Bahamas ain't all it's cracked up to be. And guess what? Your happiness starts to sail away too. So then we say, “I'll be happy **when** I can get into a **new location**.” But just because you leave one

place for another doesn't mean all your problems will go away. Why?

Because have you noticed how you always have to take yourself with you wherever you go? It's kind of like a packaged deal. Therefore, you might have a new location but after all the dust settles, you've still got the same old problems. And guess what? Your happiness settles too.

People of God, wake up! There's nothing wrong with being happy about a vacation, or even a new location. Go ahead and enjoy them. But just don't make the mistake of placing your joy **in them**. Why? Because not all trips turn out like we want them to, like this guy found out.

“There was a 17th century captain who was sailing along with his crew when a pirate ship came over the horizon. So the captain says to the cabin boy, ‘Cabin boy, get me my red shirt.’

So the cabin boy goes and gets his red shirt and they victoriously battle the pirates. Well, several days later, they spot another pirate ship off the port bow. And so the captain says, ‘Cabin boy, get me my red shirt.’

So again they again battle the pirates and yet again they are victorious. Well, later when things had settled down, the cabin boy asks the question he was dying to ask.

He said to the captain, ‘Captain, why do you always want your red shirt just prior to battle?’

And the captain replied, ‘Well, in case I am inflicted with a wound, I don't want the crew to see my injury and lose spirit.’ “Oh, I see,” says the cabin boy.

Well, a few days later, they sight 20 pirate ships off in the distance the captain yells out, ‘Cabin boy, get me my brown pants.’”

Now folks, how many of you would say that guy's trip didn't turn out quite the way he wanted it too? Yeah, the pants kind of gave it away, didn't it? But folks, this is true not only of going on a boat ride, but any ride! Why? Because **Perfect Trips** don't last forever.

Proverbs 13:12 "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when dreams come true, there is life and joy."

You see folks, there is a joy when dreams come true. But the problem is that our **dreams don't always turn out** quite like we'd want them to. So if you keep deferring your hope and happiness in a new place, you might very well end up heartsick, you might very well have to put on a new pair of pants! That's why trips come and travels go, and so does trying to find happiness in them. But if you **seek joy in the Lord**, you'll be able to rejoice, even if your location never changes. And so I ask you, "Which would you rather have?"

But that's not all. The **4th thing** we're tempted to find happiness in is in a **Perfect Bank Account**. You see, instead of receiving a permanent joy in Christ, this world tempts you and I to seek temporary happiness in an **overflowing fortune**. For instance, we often say, "I'll be happy **when** I get that **next thousand dollars**." But that first thousand dollars that seemed so big a few years ago has now shrunk from inflation. And guess what? Your happiness shrinks too. So then we say, "I'll be happy **when** I get that **next**

retirement plan.” But one plummet from the stock market and your whole financial future could bottom out overnight. And guess what? Your happiness bottoms out too.

People of God, wake up! There’s nothing wrong with being happy about saving a thousand dollars, or even having a retirement plan. Go ahead and enjoy them. But just don’t make the mistake of placing your joy **in them**. Why? Because **Perfect Bank Accounts** don’t last forever and neither can they provide us with true and lasting joy. Don’t believe me? Just ask some of the richest men in the world.

In 1923, a very important meeting was held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. In attendance were nine of the world’s most successful financiers, men who had found the secret of making money. Now, decades later, let us see what happened to these men.

The president of the largest independent steel company, **Charles Schwab**, died bankrupt and lived on borrowed money for five years before his death.

The president of the largest utility company, **Samuel Insull**, died a fugitive from justice and penniless in a foreign land.

The president of the largest gas company, **Howard Hopson**, went insane.

The greatest wheat speculator, **Arthur Cotton**, died abroad, insolvent.

The president of the New York Stock exchange, **Richard Whitney**, spent time in the famous Sing-Sing Penitentiary.

The member of the President’s Cabinet, **Albert Fall**, was pardoned from prison so that he could die at home.

The greatest ‘bear’ on Wall Street, **Jesse Livermore**, died a suicide.

The head of the greatest monopoly, **Ivan Krueger**, died a suicide.

The president of the Bank of International Settlements, **Leon Fraser**, died a suicide.

All of these men learned well the art of making money, but not one learned how to live. And might I add, neither were their lives filled with joy.

People of God, when are we going to learn that no matter how big your bank account gets, it's still no guarantee that you'll be happy. In fact, it sounds like it makes things worse not better! And people, that's precisely why the Bible has a better way.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 “And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.”

People of God, the Bible is clear. Money comes and money goes, and so does trying to find happiness in it. But the Bible declares to you and I that even if you find your self in extreme poverty, you can still have an overflowing joy. How? If you **seek it in the Lord**. And so I ask you one last time, “Which would you rather have?”

You see, it's only by seeking joy in a **Perfect God**, not comfort, not trips, not the future, and not even bank accounts, that enables us to have **A Joyful Life**. It's really our choice. And that's why Andrew Murray said:

“Joy is not a luxury or a mere accessory in the Christian life. It is the sign that we are really living in God's wonderful love, and that love satisfies us.”

And so I ask the obvious question, “How about us? Are we really satisfied with Jesus alone? Are we really in love with the things of this world?” And if you’re really in love with the things of this world then I’ve got news for you. **You will NEVER experience A Joyful Life** even as a Christian Why? Because God is the only One Who gives it!

Ecclesiastes 2:26 “God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him.”

People of God, when are we going to learn that the highway to happiness is always under construction. It’s never complete. But the journey to joy is permanent in Jesus Christ. It can only come from Him! That’s the secret! **The Secret to a Joyful Life!**

Oh people, don’t you see what’s going on here? Not all of our battles are against flesh and blood. This isn’t just about joy. It’s about being a witness! You see, the devil does not want you to be joyful in God. Are you kidding me? He wants you to be mad at God! He wants you to join him by shaking a fist at God by accusing Him saying, “God You’re no good. You don’t know what You’re doing. And I’m going to scream and shout until I get it my way and the things that make me happy!”

And folks, lest you think there’s no way to go through life with a smile on your face for Jesus, let’s once again take a look again at the life of George Whitefield. Did he have a perfect life? Did things always go his

way? Are you kidding! Let's not just look at the fruit. Let's now look at the pain.

“George Whitefield was the youngest of seven children and his father died when he was only two years old. Therefore, his widowed mother constantly struggled to keep the family together. Then he contracted a really bad case of measles, which left him squint-eyed the rest of his life.

Then shortly after he was saved, he preached his very first sermon where he was not only mocked but people complained to the Bishop that he drove fifteen people mad with his sermon.

In fact, many times while he preached we has “honored” with having stones, dirt, rotten eggs and pieces of dead cats thrown at him. In fact, one time he was struck on the head by stones and knocked off a table that he had been preaching on whereupon a mob gathered intending to kill him.

His friends not only ran of and left him behind, but he barely escaped with his life walking nearly a half a mile alone, while rioters threw great showers of stones upon him from every direction until he was covered with blood.

Once a man proceeded to beat George Whitefield unmercifully with a gold-headed cane until he was almost unconscious. He was even accused of misappropriating funds, which he had collected.

Later he married but one of his children died when only four months old. He spent over two years of his life traveling on water and in one year he traveled 800 miles on horseback.

Many days and weeks of fasting and all the other tortures to which he had exposed himself so undermined his health, that he was never again a well man.

At least once he had to sell what earthly possessions he had in order to pay for the orphanage he started as well as provide for his aged mother. In fact, when he died, he did so as a complete pauper. Everything was spent for the Lord who saved his soul.”

Oh people of God, here's the point. If anyone had a "right" to be sour towards God it was George Whitefield, right? But people, what did he do? Somewhere along the line **he had a choice to make**. And apparently he chose once and for all not to scream and shout at God but to rejoice in God! **That's the secret people! The Secret to a Joyful Life** and the key to unlocking **A Life Worth Living For**.

Therefore, if you're here today and you're sick and tired of reading the Bible in one hand and looking at your life and saying, "Man, something's missing here. Something does not compute. What is going on? Then maybe you too need to discover **The Secret to a Joyful Life**. Maybe you too need to stop living life as some ungrateful sad excuse for a Christian life and start living a life that rejoices in God **with your face!** And people, I'm here to tell you, once you do, you're going to discover just like that, that you just got empowered to finally have that **Life Worth Living For!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

"Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."
