

What is True Biblical Joy?

Joy is a positive disposition (Phil. 2:2,5; 3:15-16) seeing God's Grace and Goodness regardless of the circumstances (Phil. 1:12, 18-19; Ps. 119:71; James 1:2-4). It is not looking with our physical eyes, (2Cor. 4:18, 5:7), but with the eyes of faith, Believing All things are working together for good (Rom. 8:28), for the salvation and interests of others (2Cor. 4:15 ; Phil. 1:12, 24, 2:4,17,30) and ultimately for the glory of God (1Cor. 10:31, Phil. 1:20).

Joy is a by-product or a SUPER-natural reaction of walking by faith and allowing God to work in us (Phil. 2:14). Joy is manifested in the life of a believer and evident through humility (Phil 2:4, 3:3), obedience (2:8) generosity (4:14-19), and kindness (1:10, 4:5); patterning our life after the life of Christ (Phil. 2:5-7).

Joy is not the absence of sadness or grief, Paul was sorrowful over Epaphroditus' severe illness (2:27-28) and even Jesus experienced great sorrow in the garden (Matt. 26:37-38, Heb. 5:7), yet for the JOY that was set before Him He endured the cross (Heb. 12:2). There will be seasons (Ecc. 3:1,4) in life where we will have great sorrow, but after prayer (4:6) and meditation (4:8-11) we can CHOOSE to rejoice (2:14, 4:4) knowing that we can do all things without complaining or disputing (2:14) only through Christ's strength (4:13).

A. **Biblical Joy is Not a feeling based on circumstances, but a mindset based on our faith in God.**

1. Joy can only come from a _____ understanding of _____ life and the _____ gift of salvation.
 - Do you know for sure you have eternal life?
 - Are you telling others the Good News, especially your loved ones?
2. Faith is not an unintellectual belief of things that can't be _____, it is a confident acceptance of _____ based on evidence.
 - What, who, or where is your confidence in?
 - Do you look forward to and see death as actually better?
3. Death is not the _____ for a believer is just a _____ state of separation.
 - When we die our body and soul are separated.
 - When others die we who are alive are temporarily separated from their presence.
 - Death for the believer should not be feared but looked forward to (Phil 1:21)

4. Joy overflows from a _____ that God is working ALL things together for _____ good.

- Think back at tough circumstances in your life, can you see how God worked in them?
- When God has blessed you, have you been quick to give Him the glory?

B. Biblical Joy can only be worked out, if we allow God to work within.

1. Faith in Christ's finished work at a _____ in time, saves us from the _____ of sin, but _____ faith in Christ's work in our life, saves us from the _____ of sin.

- Are you allowing the Lord to fill your heart with Joy?

2. Joy is NOT a _____ it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit which _____ produces in our lives.

- Are your actions a proof of salvation, when others see your life, do they see Christ IN you?

3. Do NOT be _____ concerning trials or suffering in your life, they are _____ for growth

- Do you see that the difficult situations in your life may have been designed by God to grow your faith?

C. Biblical joy is not having to always be happy, in fact there will be seasons of sadness in life.

1. God is the one who created us with _____, and they should be working together with our mind and will to point us to the _____.

- When was the last time you allowed your emotions to point you back to the Lord, to seek His help, His comfort, and His Wisdom?

2. Ultimately: death should always remind us of the _____ of this life, so that we live in light of _____.

- How can we "number our days" and live each day as if a gift from God? What would you do differently if you knew you only have 2 months to live?

- What if you really got a raw deal?

3. Anger and sorrow are both _____ emotions, however wrath and bitterness are _____ thoughts.

- Do not try to stuff away your feelings, but instead take them to the Lord.

- Its ok to have sorrow and even anger, but we are never to stay there for long.