

Choose Joy

Scripture:

I John 1:1-4 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

Introduction:

The basic ingredient that every Christian should have that sets us apart is the ingredient of joy. Just before Christ’s crucifixion he spoke to His disciples about this very thing. In John 15:11 it is recorded, “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*” His joy was not diminished because of the cross. He knew there was something greater on the other side of the cross. Jesus was a man full of joy. His personality was so attractive that people wanted to follow Him even to the point of death. His enemies called Him a winebibber and a glutton which demonstrates to us that Jesus liked to be with people on happy and festive occasions.

Now John is writing to Christians in order to increase their joy. This is a choice we make. We can either be sad and in despair or we can embrace the joy of the Lord. In the book of I John we find several things that ought to increase or develop joy in the heart of the believer if we really get these truths into our spirits.

I. We choose joy through true Godly fellowship with other believers. (vs. 3)

- A. Jesus’ words just before His crucifixion.
John 15:11-12 “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.* ¹²*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*”
- B. Paul and Barnabas had each other in difficult times and were able to abide in joy.
Acts 13:49-52 “*And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.* ⁵⁰*But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.* ⁵¹*But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.* ⁵²*And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*”
- C. Watch Paul and Silas in prison.

II. We choose joy by asking the Lord for His forgiveness every time we need it.

- I John 1:9 “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”
- A. Sin and separation from God always steals our joy.
 - B. Any relationship that is not right suffers a loss of joy.
 - C. When sins are cleansed and a love relationship with God is experienced joy fills our hearts.
I Peter 1:8 “*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*”

III. We choose joy when we consider the wealth of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

- I John 2:1-2 “*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* ²*And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*”
- A. Although we’re encouraged to live above sin, Christ knows our weaknesses.
 - B. The righteousness of Christ stands before the Father in our place.
 - C. Jesus Christ is more than enough for the sins of the entire human race.

IV. We choose joy by accepting the love of God and dwelling in sonship.

I John 3:1-2 *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

A. We’re not becoming sons, we’re already sons.

B. We joy in the fact that we are continually being conformed to His images as He reveals Himself to us.

V. We choose joy by protecting the anointing that God has placed upon our lives.

I John 2:27-28 *“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. ²⁸And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”*

Title: Losing Peace and Joy

I remember talking to a girl here in this church two or three years ago. She said, "Jill, I've lost my joy, I've lost my peace, and I want it back." "Where did you lose it?" I asked. "That has nothing to do with this," she replied. "Help me to get it back." "But where did you lose it?" "I don't want to talk about that." But eventually she did talk about it. She lost it when she moved in with her boyfriend. That'll do it.

-- Jill Briscoe, "Hanging Up Our Faith," Preaching Today, Tape No. 148.