

## HOW TO BE JOYFUL NO MATTER WHAT

### How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life - Part 2

Most people don't enjoy life; they just endure it. They don't enjoy happiness. We think that life must be perfect in order for us to be happy. Often we think, if I could just change my situation then life would be great. If I could just get rid of my problems... then life would be great. But there's no such thing as a problem free life.

Ever since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and sin came into the world, so came problems with it. God's word, the bible tells us that if you're going to learn to be happy, joyful, you must learn to be joyful in the situation, in the problems, in the very experiences of life.

Now there are those of you right here now that are thinking, "But Pastor bill you don't understand my problems, my situations... and what I am here to tell you

today is no you don't understand there is a better life out there for you to live then you allowing your joy and happiness to be based on whether there are problems and situations in your life. God's word, the bible wouldn't tell us there is... if it wasn't true

### **Read [Philippians 1:12-26](#) and [Prayer](#)**

The word "Happiness" comes from the word happenstance from which we get the word circumstance. Happiness depends on happenings. Joy is internal. Happiness is external. For example you have a happy time at Disneyland, you leave and what happens? You loose your happiness. Joy is something that is constant. How do you have happiness in spite of what is going on in your life? The background of the story we just read is this; Paul for the last four years has been miserable in his circumstances. He has spent two years in prison in Caesarea for a trumped

up charge against him. Then he's put on a ship to go to Rome to appear before Nero who just loved to torture and kill Christians. He had that to look forward to... On the way he's shipwrecked, stranded on an island, bitten by a poisonous snake, waits out the winter there, continues on to Rome, spends another two years in prison chained to a guard 24/7 while awaiting trial to be executed.

Now follow me here: during Paul's two year period in Rome he is chained to a guard for 24 hours a day. He has absolutely no privacy. Every four hours he gets a new guard chained to him. Yet in spite of all of these situations, Paul says in v.18 "*I rejoice and I will continue to rejoice.*" What's Paul's secret? How does he stay positive in prison, triumph over troubles, delight in difficulties, stay so happy, positive, joyful in spite of the fact that everything has not

turned out at all the way he planned it. What's Paul's secret? And Paul gives us four secrets.

## **THE FOUR ESSENTIALS FOR JOYFUL LIVING**

### **I. I NEED A PERSPECTIVE TO LIVE FROM**

Every one of us has problems. You've brought them in here today with you. Your problems are not so important as to how you are looking at those problems. The way you look at that problem is much more important than the problem itself. Your perspective makes the difference. Paul says, v. 12 "*Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.*" Paul is saying, I can see the best even in the worst. I can see God at work in the problems even when they don't go my way, even when they don't work out my way. Paul is saying, Non-believers are being witnessed to in my attitude towards them and believers are being encouraged. Listen to

what he says in v. 13: *"As a result it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ."*

Paul had always wanted to go to Rome and start a church. He just didn't expect God to do it this way... He didn't expect the Church of Rome to be built by those around in jail. But he understood that God was in control of his life and no one else. So here it is Paul is chained to the palace guard, now these guards are actually called, praetorium guards, there were an elite group of troops, personally chosen by Caesar as his body guards and watchers of prisoners. These guards were so they were the highest paid people of the Roman empire and after 12 years of service as a praetorium guard they were made leaders in Rome. What's the point that am I trying to make here... there is not a more strategic group that Paul could witness to if he's

going to reach the Roman empire for Jesus Christ then these guards, the future leaders of Rome. Now every 4 hours Paul had a new praetorium guard chained to him. Do you see the picture here yet... every four hours Paul has a new future leader of Rome to witness too.

**Here is what I figured**, in two years at four-hour shifts changes, Paul had witnessed to 4,380 guards. Did it work, was the Good News of Jesus spread... History tells us that Nero had his wife, mother and children killed because they became followers of Christ. Paul had a captive audience. In v. 14 *"Because of my chains most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly."* Paul says, My attitude towards problems has encouraged other people. Courage is contagious. It spreads like wildfire. Other believers became

bold because of Paul being bold. A revival was taking place while Paul was in chains in jail.

What does this all mean to you. The perspective you need to live from if you're going to have joy in your life is "*And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him...*" Rom 8:28

If you're still sitting there and saying but you don't understand Pastor bill here the **LESSON:**

**God has a purpose behind every one of my problems.**

When you get this perspective... you are on the way to joyful living – 24/7. Paul says that God has a purpose behind all my problems... So therefore:

**I have a perspective to live from.**

How can we be joyful no matter what?

**II. I NEED A PRIORITY TO LIVE BY**

First I needed a perspective "*And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him...*"

Rom 8:28 and second I need a priority to live by. When things get tough I need to know what's really important in my Christian life in order to distinguish the trivial from the significant. I can be living my life either based on problems or priorities. Either you will decide what's important in your life or you will let other people decide what's important in your life. If you don't choose your priorities, you'll go around putting out one fire after another fire, living your life simply from problem to problem and not choosing what's important. In V. 15-16 Paul was saying, "*Not only am I in prison, but if you want to kick a man while he's down there are guys out there attacking my ministry. They're jealous, envious, opposing me. Other ministers are criticizing me while I am in prison.*" If you

want something to steal your joy quicker than anything else, just let other people begin to criticize you.

v. 18: "*But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*" Paul said he wasn't going to let anybody steal his joy. Neither circumstances nor critics, no one, no thing...He has set his priorities, his values; he not let little things steal his joy.

I wonder how many arguments in your marriage, in your family are over little things that really don't matter. Nothing is worth losing your joy over?

You need a perspective to live from "*And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him...*" Rom 8:28

And a priority to live by. **What should I live by?**  
Proverbs 3:6 "*In everything you do, put God first and He*

*will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*" This is what counts -- putting God first.

**LESSON: Focus on what really counts.**

### **III. I NEED A POWER TO LIVE ON**

I need a perspective to live from..."*And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him...*" Rom 8:28

And a priority to live by... Proverbs 3:6 "*In everything you do, put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*" Put God first. And third I need a power to live on.

I need strength to make it; I need strength to keep on keeping on. Let me ask you a question, can life wear you out. You bet it can... Life can drain you completely. One crisis after another can drain you. You lose your energy and your power. Some of you are ready to throw in the

towel today. It's not by accident you're here listening to this message. You say, "I've done the best I could, but it's not good enough and I'm tired and sick."

Don't throw in the towel... What you need is to tape into a fresh power supply. v. 19: *"I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed."*

Paul says, I have two things that give me strength and keep me going in spite of all that's happened and is currently happening. One is the prayers of other people. And two, is the help of God's Spirit.

Look at that verse again and circle the word "hope". See you can't live without hope. You've got to have hope to cope. Cornell University did a study of 25,000 POWs

from WWII. They found that man can handle tremendous stress and pressure as long as he has hope. The moment hope is gone you're doomed.

Paul's answer to personal energy crisis: Phil. 4:13 *"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."*

**LESSON: With God's power nothing can devastate me.**

If I am going to make it in life I need a perspective to live from... *"And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him..."* Rom 8:28

And a priority to live by... Proverbs 3:6 *"In everything you do, put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success."* Put God first.

And I need a power to live on. Phil. 4:13 *"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."* The 4 things you need to be joyful no matter

what is:

#### **4. I NEED A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR**

Paul is old and tired and been in prison for four years. He's ready to go on to heaven. They've taken every single thing from him -- friends, ministry, freedom, privacy. They've taken every thing from him except the one thing that cannot be taken from a follower of Christ and that is a purpose to live for. V. 21 "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" How would you fill in the blank? For me to live is \_\_\_\_\_.

I'd say most Americans would fill in the blank in one of three ways:

1. "For me to live is possessions." Get all you can, can all you get, set on the can and spoil the rest. Get, get, get. We buy things we don't need, with money we don't have to impress people we don't even know or like. For me to live

is to keep up with the Jones and just about the time I catch up with the Jones's they refinance and I'm in trouble again.

2. "For me to live is pleasure." If it feels good, do it.

Anything to make me pleasurable I live for it.

3. "For me to live is power, position, prestige, popularity."

We dress for success and we drive to impress. Image is everything. For many teenagers it is popularity. They'll do anything they can to fit into the peer group even if it means to lower their standards. But you can be the most popular person in your school, come back two years later and no one remembers you. One minute you're the hero the next minute you're the zero.

Some people would say "For me to live is my career."

"For me to live is to have a nice home" or "For me to live is sex" or "For me to live is food" ...

I'm going to suggest there is only one answer to that blank that is going to last into eternity. See you're going to spend more of your life on that side of death than you are on this side here on earth. There's only one answer: "*For me to live is Christ.*"

The problem with possessions, pleasure and power is that they don't last. Not a lifetime, much less an eternity. If it were true then the people who had the most pleasure would be the happiest. The people who could afford to have the most experiences would be the most joyful. But that's far from the truth. There isn't ultimate fulfillment, there isn't eternal fulfillment in possessions, pleasure and power.

Paul had a long term goal. He looked at things in the light of eternity. He had a purpose to live for: "*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has*

*called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*" Phil. 3:13-14 The best use of your life is to invest it in something that will outlast it. It's great to be a Christian, but I'm not a Christian because I'm afraid I'm going to die tonight and go to hell... but because I've got to live tomorrow here on earth. Even if heaven wasn't the reward for me living my life for Christ it would be worth it becoming a believer... just for the joy it brings me here on earth. The fact is that there is more to it than cars, stereos and nice homes and things that are here and now. The book of Proverbs says, "*Only a fool would go all through life unprepared for something he knows will eventually happen at death.*"

Ever thought of why God leaves you here on earth after you become a Christian? This I do know it wasn't for your benefit but for others. To serve others as Christ serves you, to tell those who don't know the good news about

Jesus Christ and 52 each other with in this church we call The Calvary Family. So what the Lesson,  
**LESSON: The secret of joy -- Jesus first, Others second, Yourself third.** I am convinced that the reason there is so much unhappiness in our culture, so many discouraged and depressed people is because in our society there is a total preoccupation with self. What's best for me? What will make me happy? What is the best thing for me? The ME generation.

If you are fortune enough and blessed enough to learn to have a greater purpose in your life more than just yourself; you will understand what I am talking about and you will have joy more than you can handle.

See... it has nothing to do with problem free living. When you base your life on the kinds of values that are going to last eternally, then problems just aren't as significant.

So let me ask you, what things haven't worked out as you've planned? If you have given your life to Christ and trust Him this I know God has a purpose that is bigger than your problems. I believe God wants you to enjoy the rest of your life. But it starts with the foundational values we're talking about this morning.

- If I am going to make it in life I need a **perspective** to live from... "*And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him...*" Rom 8:28
- I need a **priority** to live by... Proverbs 3:6 "*In everything you do, put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*"
- I need a **power** to live on. Phil. 4:13 "*I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.*"
- I need a **purpose** to live for... V. 21 "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*"