

John MacArthur – Sermon “Rejoice Always” 1 Thess: 5:16

Pastor MacArthur’s Statement:

“There is NO event or circumstance that can occur in the life of ANY Christian that should diminish that Christian’s JOY”.

“Let me go further: If there is an even or circumstance apart from sin that does diminish your JOY, you have Sinned”.

John MacArthur, in this sermon, then goes on to give detailed reasons why & how every Christian can have this JOY & why & how a Christian can miss or lose this JOY.

Outline:

How can we so live? Does this sound ridiculous? How can we transcend all circumstances so that nothing can diminish our JOY?? Let’s begin with the command itself: REJOICE ALWAYS given In both the OT & NT - 1 Thes 15 Phil 4:4 “Rejoice Always.. & again I say Rejoice” 1 Peter 4:14 “Keep on rejoicing” Scripture says our Joy is to be abundant, exceeding, great. Psalm 32:11

Such JOY is not natural –In fact, is not possible from the human viewpoint. IT IS, however, SUPERNATURAL. It is a product of the Holy Spirit. So if it is not natural & I can’t do it apart from the Holy Spirit, then WHY am I being Commanded to Rejoice?? Just like the command to be Holy, which only God can do, yet my will is involved in that. So while JOY comes from the Lord it is not bypassing MY WILL.

Definition: Listen carefully.

“Christian JOY is the Emotion springing from the deep down confidence of the Christian that God is in “Perfect” control of everything & will bring from it our good in time & our Glory in Eternity”. Christian Joy is not an emotion on top of an emotion; it is not a feeling on top of a feeling. It is a Feeling on top of a FACT. It is an emotional response to what I KNOW to be TRUE about My God. All of us should be in the habit of expressing joyful wonder when we contemplate the unchanging eternal relationship we have with God (the very maker of everything) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, follow the sequence:

- 1 . We are to rejoice all the time
2. This is not normal or natural – it is Supernatural
3. It is a work of the Holy Spirit but it demands OUR Will

4. If our will is to be activated we have to KNOW what we are talking about.
5. What we are talking about is a deep down confidence that “God is in Perfect control of everything & will bring from it our Good in Time & for our Glory in Eternity”.
6. If I can fix this reality in my mind then I have that deep down base from which my Christian Joy can spring.

Now – how can I build that base? Let’s start with the question Why” Why should I obey the command to “Always Rejoice”? My circumstances are NOT the way I like it, I’ve got problems, why should I Rejoice Always???

Reasons:

1. As an act of appreciation for the character of God – 2 chron. 7:10

“Because of the goodness the Lord has shown” Psalm 28:7 “the Lord is my strength & shield – my heart trusts in Him – therefore my heart Rejoices” – My joy begins in the character of my God independent of my circumstances.

2. As an act of appreciation for the work of Christ

What Christ has done for me though I be completely unworthy & undeserving – In Romans 5 Paul says it is in this great work of Christ that we “rejoice”.

“no matter what is going on in your life you have an eternal salvation produced in the wonderful work of Jesus Christ & granted to you through the sovereign choice of God & in this you can REJOICE”

3. As an act of appreciation ministry of the Spirit for the - Romans 14:17

“you have joy in the Holy Spirit- He is interceding for you constantly so that your wayward prayers conform to the will of God.” Romans 8 says: He is at work in you to produce divine purpose & goal. Holy Spirit links you to Christ, guarantees you salvation, indwells you, empowers you, enables you. Out of appreciation of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit we should rejoice always. The Triune God is at work & that is plenty of reason for unceasing JOY.

4. As an act of appreciation for Spiritual Blessings Eph. 1:3-4

“you are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly in Christ”. *“Stop to think that you have all things pertaining to life & Godliness, stop to think that within you dwells the God head & you are complete in Him, stop to think that you are partakers of the divine nature, stop to think that your God will supply all your needs through Christ Jesus, stop to think that you can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens you. There is no end the gracious blessings in your life & that is reason enough to rejoice always.”*

5. As an act of appreciation for Divine Providence. *“ Providence is a term used to describe God’s ability to orchestrate the innumerable contingencies that exist in the universe & make them all work together for your good in time & your glory in eternity.*

Every thought, every word, every act by every being that exists, every natural things, every supernatural thing, moves together to fit the perfect plan of God even though from their own viewpoints there are an innumerable number of independent acting agencies. Simply stated it is summed up in these words. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD AND ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSES. Romans 8:28.“

1. *No matter what's going on in your life there ought to be unceasing thanks & joy over the Divine Providence as God orchestrates everything for your good & eternal glory.*
 6. As an act of appreciation over the promise of future glory. The Apostle Paul says I will rejoice. For me to live is Christ & to die is gain. If I live on in the flesh fine, If I die & go on to glory, better.
 2. 7. As an act of answered prayer. God answers you every prayer for your good in time & your glory in eternity.
 3. 8. As an act of appreciation for the scripture. For it's guidance, it's availability to us. No matter what's going on in your life you have the most precious commodity. There should be an appreciation for the Word of God which feeds your soul, as a guide, a compass for your life.
 4. 9. As an act of Christian fellowship. Are you grateful for the loving family that God has given you? 1 Thes. 3:9 The love of the saints, the source of Joy. Paul's says "the joy of just knowing you".
 5. 10. As an act of appreciation for Gospel preaching. Philippians 1 Paul says: Christ is preached & I rejoice". Do you get joy out of that or do you mop around in your self focused world & just because it isn't all well with you, you can't rejoice although many are hearing the gospel & repenting, & being converted & saved? That is an act of appreciation for gospel preaching that leads to joy.

Summary: Should you rejoice always? Absolutely.

18:00 min:

Hindrances to experiencing to having Christian Joy

If you are not experiencing true God given JOY check this inventory:

1. FALSE salvation. There are some people who have no joy because they have no SOURCE of it. They are in the church but are not saved. They don't have the Holy Spirit. They may muster up a HUMAN Joy but there is not "indwelling Holy Spirit" to sustain it on a Holy Level. So the first real trial that comes along WIPES IT OUT. Supernatural Joy come from the Holy Spirit who indwells only True Believers.
2. Satan himself. Satan wants to tempt you in your trials in order to steal your Joy. To destroy your Joy of peace & contentment

3. Ignorance. Bad doctrine steals Joy. Bad Theology. An inadequate grasp of God's sovereignty, Christ's atonement, the security of the believer, a failure to comprehend the ministry of the Holy Spirit, of all spiritual blessing promised to us in Christ, a failure to comprehend the resource of prayer. Any kind of bad joy fails to recognize the reasons to true joy & steals our joy.
4. Unbelief. To disbelieve the things that are true. It is one thing to not know what is true & it is another to not believe what is said to be true.
5. Ingratitude. Never enough. If you are not a grateful person you will have trouble experiencing true joy. No matter what the Lord does it's never enough. If you don't learn to thank God for every little thing He does, for everything He has given you, for every blessing & if you want more, more, more, it breeds ingratitude & it steals JOY.
6. False Expectation. This is the false concept that Jesus is to make YOU happy, successful, rich, healthy & give you a life full of joy & miracles. That sets up a loss of joy when Jesus doesn't deliver.
That is why the "Prosperity Gospel is so destructive" because it give people false expectations. Those false expectations are going to destroy your joy because that's not how it's going to be. Jesus has another plan which is "in this world YOU WILL HAVE TROUBLE, BUT I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD". That's the source of your joy.
7. Pride. Self Centeredness. If you are just centered on yourself you are NEVER going to be happy. To be constantly messing with yourself is a miserable relationship. Excessive morbid self analysis, etc. is deadly to JOY.
8. Forgetfulness. Bless the Lord O my soul, & forget None of His benefits – Psalm 103. God gave you a memory so that you can store up a catalog of all His benedictions (promises).
9. Not Praying. Attitude I don't need prayer, I can figure it out, I don't need God. That will steal your joy when you fail repeatedly.
10. Emotions. MAJOR HINDERANCE THAT STEALS JOY. A major problem. "People lack the disciple to operate their life with an understanding of divine truth & thus they plunge into the random undisciplined sea of EMOTION. They say, How can we control our feelings, our feelings are not controllable? That's a lie right out of the pit. You & I learn that we must control our feelings. One of the purposes of God in the new birth was to restored your feelings to their God intended role. So as a Christian, we have a new nature & now our feelings can be controlled by the will of God which has been given to us by the Word & the Spirit. Now our emotions respond to what we know is true. Our joy is not a result of our feelings, it is the result of knowing the truth. There is the deep down confidence, that base of truth from which my joy springs. The joyful Christian thinks more of this Lord than his personal difficulties. The joyful Christian thinks more or his spiritual riches in Christ than his poverty on earth. The joyful Christian thinks

more of his glorious eternal future than his present pain. And when you live like that, the command “REJOICE ALWAYS” becomes not only possible but DESIREABLE. Jesus says “ I am the truth & the truth will set you free”.

Father, it is good to be so immersed in this truth. Thank you for it. May it be applied to our lives. For Christ’s sake, Amen.