



The Journey to JOY

In 2019 the Washington post released an article titled “Americans are getting more miserable, and there’s data to prove it”

In 2020 NBC released one titled “Americans are the unhappiest they've been in 50 years

In 2022, CNN posted an online analysis titled “American happiness hits record low”

“Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.”

1 Peter 1:6-9 NLT

“Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.”

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 NLT.”

Paul wrote, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content"

(Philippians 4:11).



He said, "Rejoice always" (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

1. Start With the **Fear Of The Lord**

The first step on Paul's journey to joy was the fear of the Lord.

Paul had a radical supernatural encounter that instilled the Fear of The Lord.

AWESOME = Terrifying = powerful = supernatural

THE REAL JESUS!!!!

Not the renaissance painting Jesus.

Paul was a religious man but until he met the real Jesus he couldn't walk in joy.

Your religion doesn't get you to joy (**encounter** = from religion into relationship)

You cannot have The Joy of The Lord without the fear of The Lord?

Why?

Because In His presence there is fullness of Joy.

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Where there is no fear of God there will be no presence of God.

The fear of the Lord gets you to a place where you are eye to eye with the king, he has your attention. The reverent awe of His holiness, and reality of his presence with you. In that place, the scripture says his presence is fullness of joy.



“The [reverent] fear of the Lord [that is, worshiping Him and regarding Him as truly awesome] is the beginning and the preeminent part of wisdom [its starting point and its essence],

Proverbs 9:10 AMP

Until you have the fear of god, you cannot fully experience the presence of God where there is fullness of joy.

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

What does the fear of God look like? It's not primarily being afraid of God. It looks like that The **reverent awe of His holiness.**

**And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:2
ESV**

So - again - The Fear of The Lord is the first step to attaining the Joy of The Lord.

If you feel like you lack the fear of God today....

A. Repent - for treating God without reverence

B. Ask for The fear of God - He will give it to you.

C. Seek to encounter Jesus so that you will see him rightly.

Paul was marked forever by his encounter. When we have an encounter like paul, where we see Jesus rightly, we will have the fear of The Lord.



The next step on the journey to joy...

2. CHOOSE JOY BY PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Paul chose joy. He suffered enough that he had more right to complain than any of us. But He chose another way - He knew that

in God's presence there is fullness of joy;

Once we have the fear of God we can access the presence of God.

We are told to do this with praise - thanksgiving - prayer and worship.

Psalm 95:2 ESV

“Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!”

If we're lacking joy – we need look no further than our prayer closet.

**“If you go into your prayer closet feeling hopeless and miserable-
And you come out of your prayer closet feeling hopeless and miserable - **You didn't pray, you complained.**”**

Paul understood this

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

PAUL AND SILAS CHOSE JOY - AND IT RADICALLY CHANGED THEIR SITUATION.

They show us the journey to joy in that instead of whining and complaining to God ABOUT their chains – they sang him praise IN SPITE of their chains.

Praise is transformational.



Did you know that

The command to praise God occurs approximately **250 times in scripture.**

God does not repeatedly command praise because He is narcissistic.

HE KNOWS HE is great.

He needs YOU to know HE is great.

He tells us to praise Him over and over because

YOU need to hear YOU declare His greatness.

**Because PRAISE PRODUCES JOY
GRATITUDE BRING GLADNESS**

Get personal > marriage >

Left my home

New stressors and challenges

We need joy – our families need us to have joy.

Daily Prayer – Daily worship – Daily presence.

This is a continuous discipline.

Joy of the Lord is our strength

Then the more we abide IN HIM >>> the more joy is produced IN US.

He is the vine, we are the branches

So we must have The fear of The Lord and Practice being with him in His presence where there is fullness of Joy.

3. Walk in Gods Will

Pauls life turns into an extravagant adventure you would only see in movies.

A thrilling adventure seeing lives transformed. Seeing people who have been unable to stand get up and run. Those that had crazy issues radically healed. Standing before the



most influential people in the world, with joy because he knew he was finally doing what God created him to do.

Your life with God is not meant to be easy and predicable, it's meant to be an awe filled journey of faith.

When you say yes to the call of God on your life you are saying yes to every good work set before you.

If your life is boring and lacking joy, I challenge you to ask yourself if you are walking in his will and saying yes to the calling on your life.

Because THAT is a life filled with twists and turns and miracles signs and wonders and fun in the midst of painful situations in which I guarantee you – you will COME ALIVE with joy!

You will never be so filled with joy than when you can say – I'm right in the center of God's perfect will for me.

That is joy – knowing I'm doing my fathers will.

When I walk in my earthly assignment, abiding in the holy spirit, joy is worked out and produced in me.

But Be careful...

I've seen too many friends start out on an adventure seeking to do Gods will

But they quit practicing Gods presence

And so their calling drained them of life because they had no joy

And the joy of the lord is your strength

If you say Yes to the call of God on your life and forsake the daily discipline of Gods presence...

Your call will kill you>>>



You need the connection and the Joy of Jesus to sustain you.

Nehemiah 8:10 says “the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Joy keeps us from giving up .

Joy is fuel for the journey.

Joy of The LORD is our strength.

It keeps us from quitting.

Jesus went to the cross for the JOY set before Him

and the Joy of doing His Fathers will

That’s what helped Him finish His assignment in obedience.

So once you have

The Fear of The Lord

**And you are Daily practicing the Presence of God ,
ask yourself...**

Are you submitting to Gods call on your life?

Had you said yes to the great adventure?

Have you yielded to the work of The Holy Spirit?

It might cost you your comfort... but it will produce in you JOY!

Which will help you endure to the end

Which will make you the mother/father/spouse.... You were created to be

Which will give you something this dying world will actually WANT!!!

We are meant to live a life more abundant

A life full of faith and joy.