

The Source of True, Lasting Joy

I. If Someone Asked You, "**What Do You Want Out of Life?**", What -Would Be Your Answer?

A. A common answer is: "**peace of mind**", "**happiness**", "**enjoyment**".

1. All of these are worthwhile objectives of life.
2. They are basically the same - if you achieve one you have them all.

B. People of all ages are seeking this feeling of **Joy**!

1. But most are seeking it in the wrong places and in the wrong ways.
2. Many feel that they are successful in achieving their objectives in life, but all too often things change, and they become **miserably unhappy**; they realize their joy was not lasting, and wonder where they went wrong.

II. Our Topic For Discussion Is: "**The Source....**"

A. Most do not find what they are looking for because they are looking in the **wrong places**.

B. Some turn to alcohol and **drugs** for enjoyment.

1. They find enjoyment for a while, but it doesn't last.

"At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23:32).

2. They find that they are worse off than before.

C. Many think that **sex** is the answer.

1. Pornography and fornication are too common.
2. The number of teenage pregnancies and the fact that sexual diseases are near epidemic

is evidence that many young people have **turned to sex**, but **instead of finding** True and Lasting Joy, they reap the horrible fruits of their sin.

3. The one who thinks that sex is the source of true lasting joy needs to read

Prov. 7::21-23 - *With her fair speech, she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips, she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."*

Body

I. The Joy That Is True And Lasting Is More Than Kicks, Fun And Frolic.

- A. Most miss it by seeking to gratify themselves by indulging in worldly pleasures.
- B. But these things are but for the moment, while the source of true and lasting joy offers *satisfaction* and *contentment*.
 1. Such temporary pleasures cannot be compared with the joy and delight of a life of worthwhile service.
 2. To obtain such **Joy**, there must be **this arrangement**:
Jesus First, Others Second, Yourself Last
 - a. Unfortunately, many people have it in reverse:
Self First
Others Second
 - b. But the **scriptural** way is the **only** way to have true and lasting joy. →
 - c. This call for self-denunciation is not unreasonable when we consider what

Jesus First Others Second Yourself Last

Jesus did for us.

Heb. 12:2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

II. The Source of True, Lasting Joy Is Jesus, And He Must Be Put First.

A. Jesus came to bring joy to all mankind.

1. Even at His birth, it was announced by an angel: *"Fear not: for behold, I bring thee tidings of great joy that will be to all people" (Lk. 2:10).*
2. Long before, the Psalmist wrote:
"My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation" (Psa. 13:5)
3. To produce the joy of salvation was the motive for his coming.
(Lk. 19:10) "For the Son of man is come to seek that which was lost".
 - a. Unto His chosen he said,
"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Jn. 15:11).
 - b. Before leaving them He consoled them, saying,
"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (Jn. 16:22).
 - i. **This is the joy that can be ours.**

B. Jesus must be put **first to have **Joy**!**

1. It was He who said,
*"Seek ye **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 10:37).*
2. To put it into proper perspective, He taught:
"He that loveth father or mother more than me is

not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

3. If Jesus is not **first** in the **heart**, He does not abide there at all!
 - a. He said to his disciples:
John 15:10:11 – *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."*
 - b. When our **love for the Lord** prompts faithful obedience to His will, then the joy of salvation is **ours**, and complete!

C. True Joy is found in service to God!

1. When Israel turned back to God after captivity in Babylon, a new life awaited:
(Neh. 12:42) *"Also that day they offered sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them to rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off".*
2. It was a time of **happiness** and **delight** as they **reunited** with God in their own land!
 - a. That same joy awaits all who will turn back to God as His people!
 - b. Many in this community have served the Lord, but have ceased to do so.
 - 1) They have **left** their "*first love*" and **lost** the joy that they once had.
 - 2) They **can come back**, though - just as Israel, and rejoice in service to the Lord.
3. Working for the Lord brings joy that will never fade!
 - a. The Lord said, *"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life*

eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:36).

- b. What greater joy can be found than in the knowledge that we are *workers together* with God in saving lost men!

To have true and lasting joy....

III. Others Must Be Put Second

A. Yes, we are obligated to put **others above** our own **selves**.

1. Paul said, *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phi. 2:3-4).*
2. Jesus said, *"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).*
3. Peter wrote, *"Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Pet. 5:5).*
4. You will never know real, **true joy** until you demonstrate love and kindness to others.
(Rom. 12:10) *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.*
5. Again, Paul said it simply:
"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (I Cor. 10:29).
 - a. This calls on us to be sincerely concerned for the **welfare** of **others**.
 - b. This is the true source of Joy!

B. We must especially care for those in Christ.

1. *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).*
2. Paul commended the saints in Thessalonica saying:
"...The love of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" (2 Thes. 1:3).
3. Surely, without this care and concern for others, we could not claim great love for God!
(1 John 4:20) *"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"*
 - a. By loving and serving others, we reflect God's love, and find true joy!
 - b. Put Jesus first, but others SECOND!

To have true and lasting joy....

IV. You Must Put Yourself Last!

A. Selfishness is an enemy of true joy!

1. Any man wrapped up in himself makes a very small package!
2. The self-centered, greedy, covetous man is always unhappy, seeking vainly for joy and gladness!
 - a. We should have the attitude of Paul, who said, *"I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."* **(1Cor 15:9)**
 - b. Paul was a great apostle, by no means the least, in the sense of accomplishments, but he felt that way.

c. The man who thinks too highly of himself and puts himself above others cannot be happy.

3. **Selfishness** in young children is to be **expected** and **corrected** - they can only think of their own needs.

a. By the time one is a **teenager**, he is plenty big enough and old enough to know better.

b. But we have all seen too many who only look out for # 1 - such a person has never experienced real joy.

B. When one puts himself last, it is not that he doesn't care about himself, he does because he cares about himself as well as others.

1. When one puts **God first** and **others Second**, he saves his own soul.

(Mark 8:35-37) *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospels, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul".*

a. The selfish struggle for this world and its pleasure destroys the joy of salvation to be found in Christ!

b. For this cause, we are told:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him".

(I John 2:15).

c. Forget the lures of tinsel the world dangles before your eyes: *"but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:20).

2. Only that which is spiritual endures forever!

- C. There is no rejoicing in selfish achievements.
1. Such things are **empty** and **vain** and soon forgotten.
 - a. But for eternity the words,
"well done, thou good and faithful servant", will bring joy and gladness.
 - b. We are told: *"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice!"* (Phi. 4:4).
 2. On the other hand, some were warned:
*"Ye rejoice in your **boastings**: all such rejoicing is evil"* (Jas. 4:16).
 - a. Don't seek joy in bragging about personal worth or works!
 - b. Rather, we are to **rejoice in Christ!**
 - 1) To those in Christ, Peter wrote:
"Yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8).
 - 2) This unspeakable joy and happiness is found by **stepping out of self and into Christ**.

Conclusion

- A. We can cause joy in heaven by our lives.
1. Our acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior brings joy here and also hereafter; it produces joy on earth, and also in heaven!
Luke 15:10 *"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"*.
 2. There are some here that could cause rejoicing in heaven, if only they would **believe** in Christ, **repent**, and **be baptized** for the remission of sins! And the saints here would

also rejoice.

B. There can be joy, even in suffering!

1. Even in the midst of trials and tribulations, Christians can find joy!

(Matt. 5:11-12) *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven".*

- a. This was put to the test when the apostles were beaten publicly:

(Acts 5:41) *"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame of his name".*

- b. Those early Christians rejoiced in such trials; Paul wrote:

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phi. 1:29).

- c. Peter wrote: *"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Pet. 4:16).*

2. There should be **joy** and **gladness** when we can **suffer for our Lord**, who suffered so much for us.

- a. But to obtain this true JOY, you must maintain the proper order:

Jesus First

Others Second

Yourself Last!

- b. How can I put Jesus first?

- 1) By cultivating a love for his word
– using self-discipline to conform to it.
- 2) By developing the attitude that;

I will give up life, relatives, and friends if necessary.

c. How can I put **others second**?

- 1) By being aware of the feelings of others and being considerate, kind and thoughtful.
- 2) By doing unto them as we would have them do unto us.
- 3) By sacrificing to help someone who needs your help, in whatever way it might be.
 - i. Someone might just need someone to talk to - give your time.

d. How can I put **myself last**?

- 1) When you learn to put **Jesus First** **Others Second**! you will have learned to put **yourself last**.
- 2) It is worth the effort.