

STRAIGHT TALK: The World Can't Give It to You

People search for happiness in a lot of places. They look to things like relationships, money, vacations, houses, clothes and even open doors of opportunity. Yet, while these things can bring a degree of excitement for a period of time, *happiness* is based on what is happening “in the moment.”

I was a Christian for several years before I understood that enjoying true peace, joy and fulfillment is the most important thing in life. It's something that goes far beyond happiness to a deeper joy, regardless of our circumstances. And no matter what we own, where we go, or what we do, only one thing can give us this true satisfaction—*God*.

Simply put, without God, we will never truly be able to have daily joy.

Psalm 27:4 has become one of the foundational Scriptures of my life. It says, “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek, inquire for, and [insistently] require: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord [in His presence] all the days of my life, to behold and gaze upon the beauty [the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness] of the Lord and to meditate, consider, and inquire in His temple.”

Seek is a strong word. It means “to crave, pursue, and go after something with all of your might.” Many people want a greater relationship with God—and they want to have the immense joy and fulfillment that comes with it—but they don't *crave* and *pursue* Him or lay aside other things in order to have it.

I love Psalm 16:11. It says, “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

The Lord desires for us to *live* with His joy—to be permanently, *consistently* satisfied. This all comes from spending quality time with reading and studying His Word, talking to Him in prayer, or simply sitting quietly in His presence.

The truth is everything we need to live a joyful, successful life is waiting for us in His presence. Because of the sexual abuse I suffered as a child, I was forced to grow up quickly and worry about things a child should never have to worry about. As a result, I never had the chance to be a kid—to enjoy life care-free and simply have fun. As far back as I could remember, I was always tremendously serious and intense.

Maybe you can relate. Maybe life has thrown you some curves and left you joy-less. Or maybe you are so caught up in the hurry and worry of everyday life that you've forgotten how to simply stop, have fun and enjoy yourself. If so, I want you to look at Matthew 11:28. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls]."

Jesus offers us *rest* and *relief*. It's the rest we need to live in the world and deal with stressful situations without letting them upset us, ruin our health or steal our joy. It's a supernatural rest we can only find through a personal relationship with Him—it's not something we can find in the world.

Think about this for a minute. Everyone who accepts Jesus as their Savior is taught that we're saved by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." But the same way we are saved is the way we are supposed to live. In other words, once we are born again, God wants us to do everything in life by grace through faith.

This has been one of the greatest revelations of my life. I remember how exciting it was to realize that God is not just there to help us when we have an emergency. God wants to be involved in every single thing we do on a day-to-day basis. There's nothing you're involved in that God doesn't care about, and He wants you to pray and ask Him to help you with every detail of your life.

What is our part? We simply need to go to Him! Jesus never promised us we'd have a trouble-free life, but He said we can live above our circumstances. With His grace, wisdom, peace and strength, we can deal with stress and trouble and maintain a good attitude. His rest is a rest we can have in our souls—our mind, will and emotions.

Having this rest is like giving your soul a vacation. It means that no matter what's going on, you don't have to worry about it and try to figure everything out. It's a wonderful place to be, because when your soul is at rest in Christ, your emotions are stable and you have peace and joy.

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