

5 Easy Ways to Multiply Joy in the People Around You

I smell fear when I walk outside these days. And I hear discouragement. We're all in a mess over the election and the dawning realization that the culture wars are shredding the United States.

But inside my house, we have joy in the midst of the turmoil. It doesn't make sense, except for Christ.

I've been thinking this week about the place of joy in our lives. Mixed with hope, it's an essential element for the perseverance of Christian leaders.

Look at 2 Timothy 1:3-4. Paul says: *"I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did, as I continually remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled with joy."*

Why does Paul long to see these people? He wants to be filled with joy.

Turn over to 1 John 1:4. John concludes the introduction of his letter by saying: *"We are writing these things to you so that our joy may be complete."*

Now turn to John 15:11. Jesus says to His disciples: *"I have spoken these things to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."*

Paul wants to visit to get joy. John wants to write to receive joy. Jesus teaches His disciples so that He can have joy and they can have joy.

In Galatians 5:22, joy is listed as a fruit of the Spirit: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,*

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law."

However you slice it, joy is essential. And it's in short supply these days. I imagine you could use an infusion of joy, and the people in your church could, too.

How to Multiply Joy

It's surprisingly easy. Just put on your own mask first, then help others with their masks:

1. First, find the things that bring you joy. You can't give what you don't have, so if you want to add joy to others, store it up in your own heart.

What the Cubs felt after winning the World Series—all the jumping up and down, hugging, and crying—was happiness due to their nail-biting win. One look at the Cleveland Indians confirms it. Emotions could have so easily traded places. The euphoria they feel from achieving their goal will fade, but I hope their accomplishment will be a long-lasting source of joy in their lives.

Paul says in Philippians 4 that he is going to rejoice in spite of being in prison and tells the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord always." Circumstances are not usually wonderful. We are not going to be able to fulfill Paul's command to rejoice always unless we decide to choose joy.

Choosing joy is a spiritual discipline. Practicing the things that build up joy in your heart is wise for the long-term leader.

- **Lately, oddly, I've added joy to my heart by attending funerals.** Norm Pistoia's funeral was one of the most edifying events I've ever attended. Norm was a high school teacher for over 25 years. Some of his former students came and told about how much he had impacted

their lives when they were in 5th grade. His children spoke about how strong his faith was, and how much he loved them. It was better than any movie I've ever seen.

- **An easier way I've found to find joy is in reading Scripture.** There are so many promises to claim.
- **I've found that asking a friend for prayer lightens my heart too.**
- **Family is another joy-bringer.** Yesterday afternoon I took my grandson Luke to feed an apple to Billie. Billie is the horse that lives down the street from us. Luke loves to give Billie apples! Whenever I say, "Luke, would you like to feed Billie?" He runs to our refrigerator and pulls out two apples: one for Billie and one for himself. Then he munches his in his stroller while Billie munches hers.
- **Swimming brings me joy.** I admit it's not for everyone, but one of my favorite moments of the day is when I push off from the wall on my first lap and my skin is freezing because all the blood is on the surface, but I know that in the next 60 seconds, my body will adjust and I'll start feeling endorphins from exercise.
- I have been guilty of spending too much time accomplishing and not enough time enjoying. Some of my best moments had nothing to do with getting something done. A walk along the beach. A hike at Deer Valley. A ride up Palomar Mountain.
- **Years ago a friend came to me in an exhausted state and asked how I had managed to stay in ministry so long.** I told him about my Tank-Filling List. I made it one time when I was fighting discouragement. It's a simple list of the things that I enjoy doing—those things that fill my emotional tank.

Here is my updated Tank-Filling List:

1. Prayer
2. Time with family members

3. Long Bible study
4. A good (fiction) book
5. Training for a swim
6. Looking forward to a vacation
7. A vacation that includes nature, history and culture
8. A great leadership/Bible conference
9. Listening to great preaching
10. A walk in nature
11. My back yard
12. Advising/mentoring a teachable younger Christian leader
13. Comedy
14. Paying down debt
15. Helping someone in financial need
16. Corporate worship
17. Thanksgiving Day
18. Christmas Day
19. Hearing a report of God's work in our church
20. Making new friends

Take a minute right now to jot down a list of the things that fill you up—the things that bring you joy.

As you practice the discipline of finding joy, you will be able to add joy to others.

2. Bring joy to others by enjoying them. We do that at church intentionally, and officially at parties and events. It's why we go crazy with Christmas parties. It's why we take our volunteers to a Padres baseball game every year. (Although it's debatable if the Padres bring them joy.)

We also enjoy others in friendship. Virgil and I went to lunch a few days ago because we've been friends for almost 25 years. We just enjoy each other.

You've all heard that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. One way to care for people is just to enjoy them rather than serve with them or get them

to do something that serves your ministry.

3. Compliment them. C.S. Lewis blows our minds, as usual, with his insight on praising what we enjoy: *"I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with. ... The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."*

When you tell others what you appreciate about them or that you saw the good that they did, you build joy into their hearts and your own.

4. Discover what fills up the people around you. Everyone needs a tank-filling list.

Encourage your people to make their own lists of what brings joy to their hearts and to practice the things on the list.

Support their discipline of practicing joy by prying a little to discover what fills them up.

- Flat out ask them what brings them joy.
- Listen to their stories.
- Ask them questions that lead them to open up.
- Listen to their dreams.

It's not a burdensome responsibility to bring joy to those

around you. Take Andy Stanley's advice, "Do for one what you can't do for all." Build in joy whenever you recognize the opportunity. The more you practice, the better you'll get at it.

5. Point them to something bigger. What's bigger than us that brings joy?

- Jesus (Ps. 16:11a) – there is joy in His presence. John 15:11, Luke 24:52.
- A cause (Luke 10:17)
- A ministry (1 Pet. 4:10)
- A group (Acts 2:46b)
- Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Our salvation (Ps. 51:12)

Unleash joy in the people in your church as they grow in Christ and serve with significance.

For you, church leader, it's not about getting the ministry done; it's just about the joy that comes from being part of what God is doing in and among you.

Funny how when you watch for joy, and seek to give joy, it comes back to you.

Now What?

Work on your tank-filling list.

See how many times you can build a little joy in people around you this week. {eo}

Hal Seed is the founding and Lead Pastor of New Song Community Church in Oceanside, California. Hal mentors pastors who want to lead healthy, growing churches.

For the original article, visit [here](#).