

The Choice to Rejoice

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
–**Philippians 4:4**

What separates Christians from non-Christians is not whether bad things happen to them but whether we can make the choice to rejoice in all circumstances.

In Philippians 4:4 we are given a command to rejoice: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” It is a command because joy isn’t always spontaneous. Sometimes it comes unexpectedly, but it is wrong to wait only for the spontaneous joy. Many years ago I used to sing, “Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart I will pray.” The problem with that old spiritual is that, speaking personally, if I waited until I felt the Spirit moving in my heart, I fear I would not pray all that much. Paul said to “be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2, KJV). “In season” is when the Spirit is consciously at work; “out of season” is when we feel nothing.

We are to rejoice always. Why? Because circumstances change. If we are found rejoicing at all times, we are showing gratitude. If we make a commitment to gratitude, it means we must be prepared for the unexpected trial and dignify that trial when it comes. Dignifying the trial means:

- * Refusing to complain
- * Accepting that the trial is from God
- * Letting God end the trial His way

Every trial has a built-in time scale. It will end! God will see to that. God knows how much we can bear. If we will truly believe that, we can keep our commitment to be grateful—and show it by the choice to rejoice no matter what the

circumstances.

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