

Cultivating a Lifestyle of Joy Begins With This Simple Realization

Have you truly experienced joy? Do you know what joy is and what it isn't? Do you want to cultivate a lifestyle of joy that will allow you to avoid those "if only" regrets? If so, keep reading.

We begin to experience true joy when we rest in God. It is in the absence of worry, guilt and shame that we begin to build a foundation and basis for a joy-filled existence.

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is most greatly experienced by those willing to surrender all self-sufficiency, self-promotion, self-reliance, self-protection and self-absorption. It is a gift.

I believe we are to live each day as if it were our last. How would your life be different? Would your days be filled with worry, anxiety or fear, or will they be filled with peace, love and laughter?

Joy is an emotion that inspires our most unselfish desires and motivates us to live well and give to others what we have been given. It subdues the anxious heart. Joy is an abiding sense of well-being that is more than happiness; It is deep and rich and results in the confident security of a good future. Joy is the outcome and fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Joy is contagious.

The Lord intended for us to live in the joy of His Spirit and the joy of our salvation. Enjoy this moment. Enjoy this day—it's one you will never get back. Here are seven keys to experience life's greatest joys.

Key 1: Start with salvation. Once you are born again, your eyes are opened to your own worth and how much you are unconditionally loved. Joy is deeply rooted and grounded in the confidence you have in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Unlike happiness, circumstances cannot steal it unless you let it.

Key 2: Walk in joy. Choose to walk in joy. How? By acknowledging in your heart that the Lord is near you. He has promised never to leave or forsake you. Doesn't that bring a sense of peace and well-being?

Key 3: Choose to be in His presence. Abiding joy comes from being in His presence; choose to do this daily. Develop a systematic time and place to enter into His presence. It does not have to be just at church. It can be wherever and whenever you want to lift Him up in praise and adoration.

Key 4: Do not worry. Refuse to give in to worry. Worry kills. It can literally make you sick. Give your burdens to the Lord. Be anxious for nothing (see Phil. 4:6).

Key 5: Take everything to God in prayer. To experience true joy, you must take everything to God in prayer (see Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer is a necessity. God is worthy to be acknowledged in everything, and to be thanked for who He is and what He has done for you.

Key 6: Identify joy stealers. Sometimes our joy is suppressed when we live in deception, oppression, or crisis with repeated failures and broken dreams. It can also be repressed when we live a life of regret without a God-given purpose. Remove unforgiveness, bitterness, blame, regret, blame and worldly remorse which may steal your joy. Decide today to repent and move on (see Phil. 3:13-14).

Key 7: Build joy. Devise a strategy for joy building. Ask yourself what brings you the most joy. What has God put you here on earth to do? If you want to grow in the joy you've

already been given through Jesus Christ, then learn to share the gospel, spend time in His Word daily, use your spiritual gifts for His glory and find your purpose in life.

Use these seven keys to grow in the fullness of joy and learn to walk in a life filled with hope and promise. Lay down any regret you've been carrying. Put it behind you. Walk in the joy of your salvation, and determine that this is the day the Lord has made and you will be glad and rejoice in it. God intended for our days to be satisfying. He intended for us to live in the joy of His Spirit and the joy of our salvation. Enjoy this moment. Enjoy this day: it's one you can never get back.

✘ *Adapted from No Regrets by Robin M. Bertram, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House; Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. This book is a manual that will teach you to live your life to the fullest, with no regrets, and how to build, live and leave a legacy. To order your copy click on this link.*

Prayer Power Week Beginning June 25, 2017

This week, approach the Lord with an attitude of gratitude and surrender yourself totally to His will and purpose for your life. Thank Him for who He is, what He's done for you and for revealing Himself more and more as you seek Him. Resolve to set aside time to work on the seven keys Robin Bertram shared in the article above. Continue to pray for worldwide revival. Remember our president and those working with him as they face overwhelming challenges here and abroad. Pray for the Lord's intervention for the healing of the nations (1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 3:13-17; 4:6). {eoa}