

How You Can Experience Joy Every Day of Your Life

Back in the 1970s, I used to bowl on Friday nights. I remember one night when I wasn't doing very well, and I heard the Lord speak to my heart, "Ask Me to help you bowl." I immediately thought, *I can't ask You to help me bowl!* But I went ahead and prayed, "Okay, Lord, please help me bowl better." And He did!

I remember this experience so clearly because it was a great eye-opener that made me realize God cares about every part of our lives, and He wants to be involved in everything we do.

John 10:10 (AMP) says, "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)." Jesus died so we can have life—not just a barely-get-by, "I'm hanging on till Jesus comes back" existence.

God wants each of us to have a deep, intimate, personal relationship with Him so we can enjoy our everyday lives and learn how to "do life" with Him. This means we do every single thing in our daily life with and for God. And when we realize we are just as close to Him at home doing laundry or at the grocery store as we are at church or during our time in prayer, then we are serving Him in everything we do.

It's All About Balance

The first several years I was in ministry, I didn't enjoy it. I worked too much and was too concerned about what others thought about me. I had a tendency to be this way because growing up, it seemed that the more I worked and the more I accomplished, the happier people were with me. Over time I became a first-rate workaholic.

It took me awhile to realize that "all work and no play" is

not healthy, and God wants me to have abundant life. This meant I had to learn how to balance my priorities so that my relationship with God is always first, and everything else follows. This includes my relationships with family and friends, along with work and taking time to relax.

It's not wrong to work hard, and I like to work. But if I don't make time to rest and just have fun, it won't take long for me to get out of balance and lose my joy.

Turn the Ordinary into the Extraordinary

So much of life can become a mundane routine that we only really enjoy it when we do something out of the ordinary, like go on vacation, go to a special event or do something exciting, like shop for a new dress. And many people have a "working for the weekend" mentality. But this type of enjoyment is based on emotional excitement, not the joy God gives.

The joy of the Lord is much greater than simply feeling happy. It brings peace and contentment to your soul, even when your circumstances are difficult and it doesn't make any sense. Nehemiah 8:10b says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

This kind of joy makes the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday routine enjoyable. And since most of life is Monday through Friday, we need to enjoy it!

The World Can't Give It to You

In John 15:11 (NIV), Jesus says, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." The Amplified translation says "that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing." In the ten verses leading up to this one, Jesus is talking about abiding in Him, because that's the key to living with His joy.

Abiding means "to live, dwell and remain in"; it's not just

visiting once a week at church. It's having a personal relationship with Christ, being one with Him and doing life together. The truth is apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of real value, but with Him, we can bear much good fruit (John 15:5).

God wants to abide with you every day, all throughout the day. He doesn't just want you to seek Him when you go to church or when you're desperate. His desire is to have a personal relationship with you, so you can experience His presence in everything you do. That's when your everyday life is really enjoyable!

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