

Laughter Is the Best Medicine

As a young woman, I was extremely serious. Because of the years of sexual abuse I endured growing up, I really never knew what it was like to have a childhood—to live care-free and just laugh and play.

I'll never forget the time I went to see a doctor several years back. As he examined me, he remarked, "You're an intense person, aren't you?" He was right. My personality is by nature a little more serious, but I had to learn how to enjoy my life.

Joy is a major part of God's plan for us. Romans 14:17 tells us that the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and *joy* in the Holy Spirit. It's part of His will for our everyday lives!

What is joy? It's not just about entertaining ourselves all of the time or doing something fun. As I mentioned, joy has been defined as everything from "extreme hilarity" to "a calm delight." Since I'm a more serious person by nature, the "calm delight" definition is usually my state of joy. But a good belly laugh is sometimes just what we need!

Joy is also a spiritual weapon. For instance, Nehemiah 8:10c (AMPC) says, "the joy of the Lord is your strength." And Psalm 16:11b tells us where to find joy. It says, "in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore."

Just as with peace, God is our source of joy, but we also have a choice. Life will never be perfect—we will always have circumstances to deal with. But it's how we respond to those circumstances that makes all of the difference.

Proverbs 17:22a contains some great advice if we will heed it. I know it's simple, but it's more powerful than we think. It says, "A happy heart is good medicine *and* a cheerful mind

works healing.”

Take a moment and think about how you’ve been approaching life. Do you find yourself just trying to make it through the day? If you’re honest with yourself, can you even remember the last time you had a good laugh? Well, I want you to know that the joy of the Lord can ease anxiety, depression, and emotional and physical pain. It can bring you a new level of satisfaction in life.

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Laughter is the outward evidence of inward joy, and it is proven to make you feel better. I once heard someone say that laughter is like internal jogging, and I think that is so true. Laughter improves emotional and mental health, it lifts our spirits and it dispels worry.

It’s almost impossible to laugh and be sad at the same time. This is why we would be wise to express our joy and take time to laugh every chance we get. God has given us the ability to laugh for a reason. It may seem like a little thing, but laughter is vitally important in the battle against discouragement, stress, anxiety, fear and worry. It’s a tool from God that benefits us in so many ways.

Interestingly, there have been studies done that show laughter has some exciting benefits:

Laughter causes the release of endorphins, a chemical in the body that relieves pain and creates a sense of well-being.

It can raise your energy level, relieve tension and change your attitude.

It increases antibodies and strengthens your immune system.

A good belly laugh causes you to inhale more oxygen and stimulates your heart and blood circulation. It’s like

internal aerobic exercise!

Laughter lifts our spirit, improves our mental, emotional and physical health, and de-stresses our mind. And (here is the best part): *It costs nothing.*

We have a proven, God-given weapon against stress that is free of charge and that we can use at any time, day or night.

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Maybe you haven't laughed—I mean really laughed—in a very long time. If that's the case, it's probably adding to the discouragement or depression you may be experiencing today. You'll find that you will feel better after a hearty laugh.

Sometimes I feel clean and refreshed after a good laugh. If I am tired and weary from dealing with life's issues, I often feel like my soul is a dusty closet—stale and in need of fresh air. But when I take the opportunity to have a great laugh, it seems to air my soul out, refreshing me and lifting the load off my tired mind.

You may be thinking, “Well, Joyce, I don't have anything to laugh about!” Many times, I don't either, but when you do make the time, you'll be amazed at how different you will begin to view your job, your family, your relationships, yourself and even your walk with God. You'll become a person whose first response to stressful situations is *faith* instead of fear—joy instead of sorrow.

Philippians 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, gladden yourselves in Him]; again I say, Rejoice!”

As you go about your day, *make this your goal: Rejoice in the Lord!* As the joy of the Lord gives you strength, you'll be able to face any problems you have to deal with, and you'll

enjoy your life while you're doing it.

If you're like I was—if you're too serious about life—it's time to lighten up! Learn to laugh at yourself and the things that normally frustrate you. You don't have to laugh about your problems, but thankfully, you can laugh as you trust God to take care of them.

No matter what you're going through today—no matter how intimidating your situation feels, no matter how stressful things are and regardless of how discouraging life may seem—always remember that God loves you.

You are special to Him, and He sees what you're going through. He cares about every detail of your life, and He is already working on a solution for the things that threaten to overwhelm you.

So, when things get tough and you feel like giving up, make a decision to run to God and place your trust in Him—decide to rejoice right in the middle of what you're going through. Because He's the one who can take away all of your worries, cares and anxieties—and fill you with joy.

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Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including "Battlefield of the Mind" and "Overcoming Every Problem" (FaithWords). She hosts the "Enjoying Everyday Life" radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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