

The Only Way You Can Have Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit

For many years, I went to church faithfully week after week, but I wasn't living a victorious Christian life. I read my Bible every day, served on the evangelism board and went door-to-door telling people about Jesus because I really wanted to serve God. But even though I was doing those things, I was still miserable most of the time.

Although I learned a good foundation about salvation through God's grace at my church, I wasn't learning how to change and be transformed into the image of Christ by renewing my mind according to God's Word. It caused me to live in a frustrating cycle that went like this: Go to church on Sunday, fight with my husband during the week, get frustrated with my kids a lot and feel miserable, depressed, angry—like a mess—and then go back to church on Sunday to get “right” with God again. I felt as though I didn't know how to act like a sane human being.

Ephesians 4:23-24a (AMPC) says to “be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude], and put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image. ...”

This is so important, because it's impossible to have a positive, peaceful life and at the same time have a negative mind. But when we take time to renew our minds with God's Word, we learn how to think as God thinks, say what God says, and act as He wants us to act. Then we can have what He wants us to have—abundant life in Christ, filled with His righteousness, peace and joy. (See John 10:10 and Rom. 14:17.)

How Are You Supposed to Think?

The first thing we need to understand is that when we become new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), what is normal for the world is no longer normal for us. There's a way we're supposed to live that reflects the image of Christ in the world.

For example, many people think it's normal to worry, but as a Christian, worrying is not a normal way of thinking. Philippians 4:6 says we are to "be anxious for nothing" (NKJV). This doesn't mean we won't ever feel worried, but when we do, we can pray and give it to God so we can have His peace while we go through the challenges of life.

First Corinthians 2:16c (AMPC) says "we have the mind of Christ. ..." This means no matter what our circumstances may be, we can have God's wisdom, discernment and peace to guide our decisions in the midst of them. We can live with these mindsets:

The Made-Up Mind: Colossians 3:2 says to "set your minds and keep them set on what is above ... not on the things that are on the earth" (AMPC). The only way we can accomplish what we really want to do in life is by determining what God has put in our hearts to do and then setting our minds to do it. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can make up your mind and stop over-thinking your decisions.

The Humble Mind: Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus ..." (AMPC). A person with a humble mind is peaceful because they can wait on God's timing and follow His direction; they don't constantly struggle with wondering why or when. And they aren't judgmental or critical of others.

The Focused Mind: We live in an age of distraction. It's amazing how much information is coming at us most of the time through technology, the media and the busyness of the world around us. I've decided the world probably isn't going to change, so I have to change. I'm learning how to keep my mind

on what I'm doing rather than thinking about several things at once or what I want to do next.

You Can Choose

There is a way to have righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—to have victory in our circumstances and not live based on what the world views as “normal.” And it all begins with renewing our minds. The choice is up to us.

Make the decision to spend time each day reading and meditating on the Word. Pray and ask God to help you understand how to apply the wisdom you discover to your everyday life. As you do your part to renew your mind, God will do His. And you'll love the transformation that comes with having a “normal” mind—the mind of Christ. {eoa}