



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS REAL JOY

Philippians 4:1-5

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work. 2 Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. 3 And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life. 4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice! 5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

- **What would really bring joy and happiness to my life this Christmas?**
- **Sometimes we allow circumstances, envy, people, things or worry to steal our joy.**
- **Happiness depends on “happenstances” or life’s circumstances, while joy is something that can be experienced even during the most difficult times of life.**
- **We need to have joy in order to: 1) live an “enjoyable life,” 2) be good witnesses for Jesus, and 3) survive life’s struggles (Nehemiah 8:10).**
- **Jesus wants to enable us to live joy-filled lives even during trying times.**
- **Jesus - “I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” (John 15:11)**
- **How can we experience “overflowing joy” this Christmas season?**

Experiencing Joy This Christmas Season Will Require:

STAYING TRUE TO THE LORD

- **“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord.” (Philippians 4:1)**
- **“Staying True to the Lord” involves *Pursuing The Lord*.**
 - Paul - *“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10)*
 - **We pursue a strong relationship with Jesus through daily prayer and Bible reading, living for Him, attending Church services and serving Him.**
 - **Daily pursuing Jesus’ presence brings peace, power and joy to our lives.**
 - *“You (O Lord) have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine.” (Psalm 4:7)*

- *“Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!”* (Psalm 34:8)
- **“Staying True to the Lord” involves *Living for the Lord*.**
 - Pursuing the Lord helps us to live a godlier life, which brings us more joy.
 - *“How joyful are those who fear the Lord - all who follow His ways!”* (Psalm 128:1)
 - *“The life of the godly is full of light and joy...”* (Proverbs 13:9)
- **“Staying True to the Lord” involves *Serving The Lord*.**
 - The Lord - *“My servants will sing for joy...”* (Isaiah 65:14)
 - People who serve the Lord by serving others with their time and talents experience greater joy in their lives.
 - Our Church has ministry opportunities in the children’s, student, college, Life Group and other ministries, and with groundskeeping, facility upkeep, greeting, ushering, baptismal assistance, office assistance, etc.
 - *“I take joy in doing Your will, my God.”* (Psalm 40:8)
- **What steps do I need to take to better “stay true to the Lord”?**

Experiencing Joy This Christmas Season Will Require:

RECONCILING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

- *“Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News.”* (Philippians 4:2-3)
- **Sometimes even the best of people have disagreements and conflict with one another, and if those conflicts aren’t resolved they rob us and others of joy.**
- *“Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.”* (Romans 12:18)
- **Conflict with others is inevitable, but reconciliation should be pursued through loving others and following Biblical principles (Matthew 18:15-17).**
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Asking God For Wisdom*.**
 - *“If you need wisdom, ask God, and He will give it to you.”* (James 1:5)
 - The Lord will help us know when to approach the other person, where to approach them, and how to approach them.
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Accepting Our Share Of The Blame*.**
 - Even if the conflict is primarily the other person’s fault, we need to start with our flaws and faults.
 - *“What causes fights and quarrels and conflict among you? They are caused by the selfish desires that are continually at war inside you.”* (James 4:1)
 - **Self-centeredness is always one of the major causes of conflict.**
 - **When we’re at peace on the “inside,” most of what happens on the “outside” doesn’t trouble us in significant ways.**
 - Immaturity and pride are also major sources of conflict.
 - **Acknowledging our part of the blame often enables us to to remove the log jam that keeps us from reconciling relationships.**
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Listening To The Other Perspective*.**
 - *“Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.”* (James 1:19)
 - **When people feel like they’re not being listened to they feel hurt and angry..**

- *“You should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 2:4-5)
- **Becoming more focused on others’ hurts and needs over our hurts and needs helps us to resolve conflict.**
- *“We must be considerate of the doubts and fears of others.”* (Romans 15:2)
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Speaking The Truth Lovingly.***
 - *“Speak the truth in love.”* (Ephesians 4:15)
 - **When we say things offensively, they will be received defensively - (we are never persuasive when we’re abrasive).**
 - *“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”* (Proverbs 12:18)
 - *“Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.”* (Ephesians 4:29)
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Focusing On The Problem Rather Than The Blame.***
 - *“Now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, . . .”* (Colossians 3:8)
 - **Whenever we focus on fixing the blame rather than the problem, we waste energy, hurt the other person, and damage the relationship further.**
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Pursuing Reconciliation Rather Than Resolution.***
 - **Resolution requires resolving every disagreement, while reconciliation involves mending the relationship even when we don’t agree on everything.**
 - **When we focus on reconciliation in broken relationships, sometimes the issues become insignificant.**
 - *“God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And He gave us this message of reconciliation.”* (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- **“Reconciling Broken Relationships” involves *Forgiving Others Like God Has Forgiven Us.***
 - *“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”* (Colossians 3:13)
- Jesus - *“If you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar . . . and you remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”* (Matthew 5:23-24)
- **Many people practice procrastination or avoidance when it comes to reconciliations, but the only way to resolve conflict is to deal with it.**
- **Fear is what keeps most people from striving to resolve a broken relationship, and we must never let fear overcome us (Genesis 3:8-10, 2 Timothy 1:7).**
- ***What are some steps that I need to take to reconcile some broken relationships?***

Experiencing Joy This Christmas Season Will Require:

REMEMBERING THAT THE LORD IS COMING SOON

- *“Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.”* (Philippians 4:4-5)

- **When we know that the Lord is coming back to rescue us and to make things right, we can have joy regardless of our circumstances.**
- *“Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)*
- **Circumstances don’t have to rob us of joy and peace.**
- *“Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. . . . When your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.” (James 1:2-4)*
- Jesus - *“Rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)*
- **We can have joy regardless of our circumstances or relationships if we know that we’re right with the Lord and that we’re headed to Heaven.**