

Nine Secrets of Healthy Relationships

Joy – Part Three

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) ²² But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

- Some people get uncomfortable when a pastor preaches on “relationships,” but that’s where our Christianity is lived out – in our relationships with God, with family and friends, and with others. I’m not known as a Christian on the basis of what I believe, but by the fruit seen in my life!
- For about 50 years Hollywood has been teaching us a myth that if I just find the right person then I’ll live happily ever after. You may have walked down the aisle at your wedding thinking, “I’m going to live happily ever after!” but were you in for a big surprise!
- The fact is, even the best of relationships goes through ups and downs. You’re not happy all the time in a relationship. You married a human being; you’re friends with a human being. People get sick, we argue, we have misunderstandings, sometimes we’re inconsiderate, sometimes things just don’t go right. Life is not a constant honeymoon. Some days, to be honest, are just a complete disaster.
- **You know it’s going to be a bad day when ...**
 - your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell’s Angels on the freeway.
 - your twin sister forgets your birthday.
 - you sink your teeth into a beautiful steak and they stick.
 - your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
 - you wake up to discover that your water bed broke and then you realize that you don’t have a water bed.
 - you put your clothes on backwards and they fit better.
- Whenever we look for relationships, whether it’s in a marriage or a friendship, people say, “I just want to be happy.” There’s nothing wrong with that. But today we’re going to talk about something far better than happiness. **What you need in your relationships is not happiness; what you need is joy.**

- Joy is very much different than happiness. Most people think, “If only I could ...” or “If only someone else would ...” then I could be happy! They have DESTINATION DISEASE. But life is not a destination, it is a journey! You’ll never “arrive!” The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but the water bill is higher over there too!
- After people make drastic changes, walk away from marriages, quit decent jobs, switch careers, move across the country, build a new house, buy a new car, or get a great promotion, THEY STILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEMSELVES, SO THEY ARE STILL UNHAPPY!
- **Nowhere in the Bible does God advise us to pursue happiness – because happiness is not a Biblical concept!**
- The word “happiness” is only used 22 times in the Bible (NT – 6X, OT – 16X), and it NEVER means what we have been conditioned to think of today! In the Bible, “happy” doesn’t mean, “having everything go my way.” It means, “blessed or favored by God.”
- Happiness is extremely vulnerable!
 - Happiness wrapped up in people is insecure because people let us down.
 - Happiness centered in possessions is unsure because material goods deteriorate and depreciate.
 - Happiness based on health is unreliable because time takes its toll on all of us.
 - Happiness grounded in social achievement is unpredictable because a new star eventually eclipses you!
- Everything we build our happiness on eventually double-crosses us! That is why the world is full of cynical and discouraged people; this is why we live in an age of despair. People have tried everything to attain happiness, and it never lasts! Sinners are basically BORED!
- In contrast to happiness, the Bible uses the words JOY, JOYFUL or REJOICE over 160 times. And it teaches us that joy only comes from the Spirit of God living within us! This is how it works:

Happiness is external	Joy is internal
Happiness is temporary	Joy is permanent
Happiness is based on chance	Joy is based on choice
Happiness is based on circumstances	Joy is based on Christ

THREE RELATIONSHIP KILLJOYS

Almost anytime you're having problems in a relationship it will be one or more of these three things. They always kill the joy in relationships.

1. SELFISHNESS

- Selfishness says, "I want what I want."
- **James 4:1-2 (TEV)** Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you. You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it.
- The root problem of relational difficulties is a power struggle between two selfish, insecure people. For a lot of us, to solve the relational problems we're in right now, the simple solution is to grow up and stop being so self-centered.
- **James 3:16 (NLT)** For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil.
- In other words, you can't be joyful and jealous at the same time. Selfishness undermines relationships. Get the focus off yourself!

2. RESENTMENT

- Resentment says, "I won't forgive you."
- We hurt each other in relationships, sometimes intentionally, sometime unintentionally – it's a fact of life. What you do with that hurt makes a difference whether you're joyful or you're miserable. Nothing destroys a relationship faster than resentment.
- **Hebrews 12:15 (LB)** Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives.
- Resentment eats up emotional energy, because you spend all your time resenting the fact that someone hurt you.
- **Proverbs 11:29 (LB)** The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left.
- In other words, if you refuse to forgive, you're only hurting yourself. Resentment steals joy!

3. FEAR

- Fear says "I don't trust you anymore."
- When fear builds up in your life, the joy goes out of your relationships.
- **Proverbs 12:25 (NKJV)** Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.
- Fear causes us to build walls between us instead of bridges. When you're full of fear there is no emotional intimacy, and when there is no emotional intimacy there is no joy.
- **1 John 4:18 (NKJV)** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.
- Fearful people cannot give love and cannot receive love because they're always afraid of being hurt again.
- Fear does three things to relationships:
 - Fear makes me DEFENSIVE. I won't admit it when I'm wrong.
 - Fear makes me DISTANT. I won't share my real feelings.
 - Fear makes me DEMANDING. I must always be in control.
- By the way, these are the three basic feelings that interfere in our relationship with God as well! Selfishness, resentment and fear.
- Most people try to do something to bring "happiness" into a troubled relationship, but that's only a temporary solution! What you need is JOY! And that only comes from God's Spirit!

JOY IN A RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T COME FROM RECEIVING, IT COMES FROM GIVING! Humanly speaking, you are wired to receive. But the Fruit of the Spirit "rewires" you to give!

- **Acts 20:35b (CEV)** Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving."
- The first key to joy in a relationship is you've got to focus on somebody else rather than on yourself.
- The problem is as relationships grow, after we've got them established, we don't put as much emphasis into maintaining them as we did to start it.

- **The five stages of a marriage cold:**
 - First year -- "Baby, darling, I'm worried about that sniffle you have. I've called the paramedics to take you to the hospital for a checkup and some rest. I know you don't like hospital food so I'll bring you some home cooked meals."
 - Second year -- "Sweetheart, I don't like the sound of that cough. I've arranged for Dr. Johnson to make a house call. Let me tuck you in bed."
 - Third year -- "You look like you've got a fever. Why don't you drive yourself over to the Medical Clinic and get some medicine and I'll watch the kids."
 - Fourth year -- "Look! Be sensible. After you've fed and bathed the kids and washed the dishes, you ought to get in bed."
 - Fifth year -- "For Pete's sake! Would you stop complaining?"
- One man said, "When I used to come home, my wife brought me slippers and my dog came barking. Now things are reversed."
- Joy doesn't come from making me happy, joy comes from making other people happy. God designed it that way!
- One popular myth goes like this: "When I get all my problems solved in this relationship, I'll be happy." That's not going to happen! Life is simply a series of solving problems. If the only time you learn to have joy in your relationships is when you've got all your problems solved, you're never going to have joy in your relationships. You must learn to have joy even in the middle of problems!
- You say, "I'm exhausted, I don't have anything left to give." That's why you need Jesus Christ on a daily basis. That's why you need His power to give you joy when human energy runs out.
- **Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
- **How is it possible to always be joyful?** When Paul wrote this he was in prison. He was about ready to be executed. He was writing to the Phillipian church which is the book on joy. Nineteen times in the book of Phillipians he used the word "joy" or "rejoice". If you're depressed, go home today and read through the book of Phillipians. Note where the words "joy" or "rejoice" are used.
- Paul wasn't counting on his circumstances to bring him happiness; he was counting on the Holy Ghost to give Him joy!
- The Old Testament uses several different words to express the joy and rejoicing that is an aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit:
 - Simchah – “bright and shining” (i.e. the eyes of a child)
 - Masos – “leaping for joy” (i.e. lame man at the temple)
 - Rinnah – “shouting for joy” (i.e. Pentecostal worship)
 - Giyl – “spinning for joy” (i.e. God Himself in Zephaniah 3:17!)

Zephaniah 3:17 (KJV) The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.
- This joy can only be yours through the indwelling power of God's Spirit – it's called the “baptism of the Holy Ghost!”
- **Psalms 16:11 (KJV)** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
- When I don't have joy it's a warning light that I don't have God's presence in my life!
- **John 16:24 (NKJV)** Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
- All you have to do to receive the Holy Ghost is give your life to God (that's called “repentance”) and then ASK. It's a GIFT!
- The Bible says, "the fruit of the Spirit is joy." That means joy is not something you can manufacture on your own. But it is the natural by-product when you let Jesus Christ live in and through you!