

Giving Needs

President's Thoughts

Sometimes, perhaps often, the emotion of happiness may come with a lifestyle of joy, but it is not a requirement. Suffering, pain, loss, betrayal, etc. can and will come with a life of joy as well. God desires us to live in His joy as we excitedly exchange vows with the one we love, and in the midst of loneliness after a heartbreaking divorce. He desires us to live in His joy while we experience the miracle of a child being born and in the midst of a tragic loss of a family member. He desires us to live in His joy when we are blessed with a stable job and financial security and while we are wondering how we will feed our families for the next month. He desires us to live in His joy when life seems peaceful and easy and when we are required to make hard decisions to glorify Him despite it not giving us a positive emotional experience in the moment. God desires us to be full of His joy at all times as His children, for this will be a testament to ourselves and others that we actually believe that He is the Great Architect and Artist, always redeeming and making things right within His love, despite what things may feel or seem like in the moment. And the great thing is that God doesn't just desire for us to be joyful in all seasons, but makes it readily available as a gift from His Spirit for those who seek and accept it.

The most beautiful picture of joy in the midst of tragedy can be found in the life and death of Jesus, as the author of Hebrews writes, *"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Hebrews 12:1-2). Jesus' life of joy was consistent throughout his entire life, despite his humanly emotions, due to the faith that He had in His Father's ultimate plan, even while experiencing being deserted by His loved ones and enduring His agonizing death on the cross.

As we learn to distinguish a life dictated by the emotion of happiness and choosing to live a life of His joy, may we allow Paul's prayer to the people of Rome take root in our hearts in all seasons and situations in our lives, despite what temporary emotion may be in our minds and hearts:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Scripture Quote

Upper Room Picture

Upper Room

Coffee Picture

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