

/// The Source of All Power

Philippians 4:4 – 6

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~ The goal of the natural man and woman of the world is to “*be happy and satisfied.*” So, naturally, most people pursue things in life that they perceive will bring them the most fulfillment. Unfortunately, there comes a time in life for everyone when the newness of existential worldliness fades. We realize that keeping up with life’s costs are more than we can afford. Many are left with sheer disappointment in life and hopeless abandon. That’s the way the world produces its worldly stuff, friends; always has – and always will.

Those same people subsequently move along to the next great momentary fad or fashion; only to discover that thing wasn’t quite it, in terms of bringing them satisfaction, either. In turn, the church desperately attempts to step in and help their congregation manufacture joy. A whole bunch of money is donated and spent trying to produce joy. Joy should be the number one impression for any new visitor to a church, to be sure; but it must be sincere and honest; the result of genuine happiness. That satisfaction can only come from resting in Christ. Tragically, the manufacturing of synthetic joy is a trillion-dollar industry of an imitation, fake Christianity, labeled religion; and this world cannot get enough.

The church is an embarrassment in the world. I have seen a church where the pastor dresses like a clown; and another where the pastor preaches nearly-naked – and yet another where they get high on marijuana during the service – all while proclaiming to be worshiping God. Well, dullness in the church is the resulting problem; and there are a lot of clowns in the pulpit – many of them spiritually naked – and they always say things that indicate they must be on drugs, too – but – that’s not the joy of the Lord, friends. They’ll never be happy making merchandise of Holy Writ. A real joy of the Lord only – *ONLY* – comes from, by and through the Holy Spirit indwelling us, living through us, speaking through us, and working in our lives as the result of a willful obedience to the commands of Christ Jesus. There is no other way to experience joy in this world – *none* whatsoever.

Oh, how we need the Spirit of God to bring joy to the hearts of God's children today....

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

~ Nehemiah told the mourners in his day not to weep, saying, “.... *go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength....*” Paul meant rejoice A-L-W-A-Y-S! Our outward circumstances have nothing to do with our inward joy. We all have dark days — some will be traumatizing beyond imagination. We all face problems and temptations. It doesn't matter who you are or where you are, or what you have, or when you are reading this report — which is only written for believers, by the way — we are to rejoice *always*.

Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit that is produced in our lives only when we are walking in the direct will of God. We cannot work joy up on our own. If we aren't happy, everything is a laborious chore. Joy is a fruit grown by God — or it doesn't appear in a human life. Joy in the Lord is the only power you and I will ever have in our so-called Christian lives. The deflated and defeated Christian has no power whatsoever in their lives. The men rebuilding Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day had never heard the Word of God taught properly, correctly and completely when they were in captivity back in Babylon. Never. They had heard fractured pieces and disconnected parts of the law here and there, recited from fading ancestral memory; but they were equally as ignorant and in the same darkness as any heathen or pagan nation around them during the seventy years captivity. When they heard the Word of God, read and explained for the first time in truth by Ezra, it meant something to their hearts. They collectively broke down and cried.

Well, God has given us all things richly today. The Lord wants us to have enriching, fulfilling lives down here — so we can live for Him. We can only truly yield to the mind of Christ when we have genuine joy in our lives. Paul wasn't weeping and complaining about his incarceration. No, he was rejoicing in his suffering. How are you doing with accepting that Scriptural tenet of truth, friends? ~

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

~ Believers are to be reasonable people. Naturally, we all have deep convictions that make us borderline bigots on certain topics; but, if we refrain from riding our hobbies, we can free ourselves from constantly emphasizing a small-minded insignificant point that only causes strife and division. We need to learn to see the big picture in Christianity; and that means to see the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does Christ really bring you joy in your life today? Satan wants to take away all the joy from your life; because the joy of the Lord is our strength – Christ is the source for all of our power! Paul honestly knew that the Lord Jesus could come at any moment during the day or night as he sat in madman Nero's prison house; and he wasn't looking for a period of tribulation to begin, either. No, he fully expected to be released and go visit the churches he had established. Dying in prison was not part of Paul's plan....

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

~ "Nothing" and "everything" in verse six present two pronouns that produce a profoundly paradoxical statement. There are no two entities that are further apart than "everything" and "nothing." If you have nothing, you don't have everything; and if you have everything, then you don't have nothing. We are to worry about nothing, but pray about everything. However, let's keep this real as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God: we're not to put on rose colored glasses and deny reality. Denying that the sin in our life is real and denying that sickness is associated with the flesh, and denying that believers can have problems, or simply ignoring said problems, isn't what we're talking about here – that's never going to work. We're talking about honestly trusting Christ now.

Praying about everything is a privilege that includes asking God to handle the minutest and most mundane details in our day to day existence. Praying about everything demands beginning with confession of sins. If you don't start there with the Lord, then you cannot start. We won't have any

thanksgiving — and no joy — nothing — in our heart; unless we begin our prayers in confession of sins. I cannot overemphasize that truth. *“Nothing”* is the most exclusive word in the English language; it doesn’t include anything. There is nothing that God will not answer His children when they pray to Him in His will. You do not have unanswered prayer in your life if you trust Christ — and I say that dogmatically. Perhaps you aren’t as confident in that statement as I am? Well, to worry about nothing is an area of Christian living that I must confess: I fail in — almost always. I worry. I pray about everything, the best I know how to — and I don’t leave anything out; but I do worry, too. That’s what’s real. Dealing with that sin is where our Spiritual Safari goes in prayer ~

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