

PASS THE CHRISTIAN JOY PLEASE

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Joy—[joi] noun

1. The emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; keen pleasure; elation: *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."* (Matthew 3:17)

2. A source or cause of keen pleasure or delight; something or someone greatly valued or appreciated: *I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!* (John 15:11).

3. The expression or display of glad feeling; festive gaiety: *When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy.* (Luke 1:44)

4. A state of happiness or felicity.
-verb (used without object)

5. To feel joy; be glad; rejoice.
-verb (used with object)

—Synonyms

1. Rapture. 2. Bliss. See "Pleasure".

—Antonyms

1. Misery, unhappiness, sorrow, grief.

(Source: <http://www.dictionary.com>)

Joy is the capstone of Christian life. The word "joy", or its partner phrase "joyful" is used in the Bible 333 times (NLT), making it a central theme in our relationship with our creator. In the first chapter of Genesis, as God gives us a bird's-eye view of his formation of the world, the words "was good" are mentioned 7 times indicating, that from the ground up, joy was a key ingredient in all of God's plans.

But then we humans came along and messed it all up. As Romans 5:12 says, "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." In other words, it was sin that smashed all of the beauty God had planned for us. We made the choice to separate ourselves from our creator and his plan. As a result, we are now left discontented, miserable and unable to ever feel fully complete.

At this point, you may want to ask, "Why would a loving God ever want to allow all of the suffering that sin has caused"? The answer is, he wouldn't want to and doesn't. His solution was sending Jesus to absorb all of the punishment for all sin. As I like to tell my kids, when we were bad, Jesus came and stood in the corner for us. Romans chapter 5:18 completes the picture when it says, "Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone."

So, God fixes you and me, upon our request, at our eternal core level. It's not about religion, what you've done or even tried to do. It's about that personal relationship and forgiveness by God that you, quite honestly, had nothing to do with (read: grace).

Well, wait a minute. If Christ's sacrifice rebooted our "sin counter" permanently, doesn't that mean that the initial joy God intended for us has been restored? Yeah, I know that the sin of the world we live in hasn't gone away, but the joy that God intended; the "emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying" (Dictionary.com) now exists in your life and mine in a very real way.

However, life is made of choices. Satan is real and wishes no one would ever freely accept God's gift of permanent forgiveness for to do so literally shuts off all direct control he has over us. If you do choose Christ, understand that Satan will do everything he can within his now limited power, to blur your view of the joy you now possess. That's because as long as you look down, you will be very little, if any use to God.

But guess what? Satan no longer has control over you so; you are free to indulge yourself in the joy that God has offered to your heart's content. Just think of what God told us when he said, "Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4) and "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). I know it all may seem surreal at times, but grasp the fact that you have been granted full permission to overflow with joy. You must get use to what the freedom to be truly joyful feels like and adjust your compass to a new heading.

The worry-free joy of life in God, through his son Jesus Christ, is quite different than the shallow, superficial and transient pleasure this sinfilled world offers. Your new life's joy is complete and full and is yours way beyond your years here on earth. To that extent, shed your old world search for a "happiness band-aid" and embrace your new "happy-go-Godly" way of eternal life!

Cheers!

Bill