

Foundations For Living

Laying Foundations Today For a Brighter Tomorrow

FOUNDATIONS NEWS

MARCH 2015

SEARCHING for JOY?

by *Linda Ensley*



I gaze out my dining room window on this lovely March morning, knowing that beyond the window there is a day filled with mild temperatures and sunshine. “This is pure joy,” I say to myself. As soon as the words escape my lips, I’m reminded that I live in Wisconsin. That fact, by itself, shakes me back to reality. I know that this won’t last, more cold weather is likely to come as well as more snow. It seems as if every year spring and winter play tough-of-war though most of March and April and even into May.

The warming weather can make me happy. It can make me hopeful. But it cannot bring me true joy. Joy is not really an emotion or a feeling that comes and goes.

Joy is an inner knowing that, no matter what the circumstances may be, God loves me and is in control of my life.

1 Peter 1:8-9 links joy to our faith in speaking of Jesus Christ: **“Although you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”**

Joy is a gift from God, but it is also a fruit of the Spirit. Because joy is not something that is created by outside forces, we must commit to be joyful.

The Bible couples joy with perseverance in *James 1:2-4*:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

When a child struggles to walk, ride a bike, learn to read or excel in a specific task, it’s the perseverance in having overcome the struggle that bring him joy.

Think of the way a new mother has to persevere though the pains of child birth. *John 16:21* states it clearly: **“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.”**

Jesus, himself, suffered the pain and shame of the cross. *Hebrews 12:2* commands us to look to Him. **“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Joy and love are intertwined. Love produces joy, just as faith and perseverance produce joy.

Jesus shared this with His disciples as they were on their way to the Mount of Olives the day before His crucifixion. Jesus’ words are recorded in

John 15:9-12

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

Our society today seems to be looking for joy in all the wrong places. Some believe money will bring joy; others look to possessions. Many try to find joy in entertainment, alcohol or drugs. Some look to a spouse, children or close friend bring them joy.

True joy can only be found in faith in Jesus Christ.

Are you looking for joy? You will find it wrapped in faith, perseverance, and love.

