

<p>The Book of Joy - 2 spiritual giants, 80th birthday week, how do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?</p>	<p>They constantly tease each other, they dance together, "they were more 8 than 80". They share communion and meditation practices!</p>	<p>How can joy be transformed from an ephemeral STATE into an enduring TRAIT - from a fleeting feeling to a lasting way of being?</p>	<p>Teachings, science, and stories... the complex variety of shades of Joy!</p> <p>(amusement - like a belly laugh -- to relief (following anxiety) -- to exultation (after accomplishing something difficult) -- spiritual radiance - a serene joy borne from deep well-being)... to radiant pride over a child earning a special honor.</p>
<p>Joy Comes from Healthy Relationships between Parents and Children</p>	<p>Prov 23:24-25</p> <p>24 The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.</p> <p>25 May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful!</p>	<p>(Luke 1:14) - But for those who are single, YOU can be a joy and a delight to others (just like John the Baptist)</p> <p>14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,</p>	<p>And here's another interesting Nuance!</p>
<p>Joy comes with Feasting and Spirits (Esther: "a day of feasting and joy" repeated over and over again - after the people were rescued from genocide) - their sorrow turned to joy!</p>	<p>Joy comes with fasting and choosing not to indulge -</p>	<p>(Luke 1:15) for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.</p>	

The Disciples were Filled with Joy and with the Holy Spirit

(Acts 13:52)

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. **50** But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. **51** So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. **52** And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Despite Persecution!

There's an association there!

Between JOY and the Holy Spirit!

Ask yourself if you have the Holy Spirit

DL - taken away at 2 to biome the DL. Facing Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, he becomes the ruler of 6 million people and in a desperately unequal war. Since negotiations didn't go thru - he and there was threat of massacre - he chose to go into exile...

Realizing how much he had in common with others though -- becoming refugees -- helped lessen the pain. Helped unite his situation with others, enlarge his identity, get to a place of empathy and compassion.

"We lost our own country and became refugees, but that same experience gave us new opportunities to see more things...So personally, I prefer the last 5 decades of refugee life. It's more useful, more opportunity to learn, to experience life. Therefore, if you look from one angle, you feel, oh how bad, how sad. But if you look from another angle at that same tragedy, that same event, you see that it gives me new opportunities. So, it's wonderful. That's the main reason that I'm not sad and morose. There's a Tibetan saying, 'wherever you have friends that's your country, and wherever you receive love, that's your home.'" (38)

("I am very skeptical about the magical sensations that some attribute to being in the presence of spiritual teachers, but from the very first day I found my head starting to tingle...perhaps it was simply an example of how my mirror neurons, those empathic brain cells, were internalizing what I was witnessing in the eyes of these two ...men." (6)

<p>Joy comes with Public Worship (Psalms) -- regathering after being captive: "When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him'" (Psalm 126)</p>	<p>I gotta tell you about meeting Art this week. He came up to me after a week of hearing our kids' songs and wanted to know how he could find them on Youtube. And who we were. And where we were going to meet after this week? And it reminded me of how Larry said last week, without a building, we're kind of nomadic! And while that's a bit true, I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing. I've always been convinced being together as a people is more important than where we meet. This community of inter-relationship is stronger than the brick and mortar of where we happen to be renting -- or even of where we happen to one day buy, Lord willing! I'm actually GLAD we had VBC all week here at the park, because we got to MEET Art, and get to hear his story. For that alone, this feels worth it.</p>	<p>So -- Joy comes with Public Worship... wherever it may happen or take place...</p> <p>But Joy also comes with Private Devotion</p> <p>There's nothing like my early morning QT practice and my late night time with the Lord reflecting on the day -- that fills me with joy and peace, calm and quiet, rest and strength.</p> <p>(they tease each other about how long they pray - DL gets up at 3 to pray -- for 5 hours. Tutu was like, "that's way too much." -- but he, in his characteristically humble and self-effacing way, was dismissing his own prayer practice of 3-4 hrs/day. He sleeps in -- until 4. (They all go to bed early -- like at 7 pm :D)</p>	<p>This is how I and YOU and WE "remain in God's love."</p> <p>Jesus famously said, in John 15 - "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. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."</p>
<p>Joy Comes Thru Being Other-Centered (they all VERY much agree about this... and so do we. We value knowing your limits, practicing self-care, establishing boundaries, and so forth... but when it comes down to it...]</p>	<p>There's nothing like pouring out your life into others.</p> <p><i>Spending quality time with families sharing lunch by playground afterwards</i></p> <p><i>Joy comes thru loving a people and a place over the course of many years -- and continuing to do so.</i></p>	<p>(1 Thess 2:19:</p> <p>19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?</p> <p>(Carol leaving for NJ!)</p> <p><u>Day 5's Theme: Jesus' Power Helps Us Be Good Friends</u></p>	<p>1 Thess 3:9:</p> <p>9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?</p> <p>(Glamping in Gilroy, VBC)</p>

For the joy set before him, endured the cross!

Jarrin asks, “did Jesus like the cross? Did he want to die?”

- **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2)**

[Happy Brain research - Richard Davidson, neuroscientist who is a friend of the DL - neuroimaging of the brain:

4 independent brain circuits that influence lasting well-being:

- 1) Ability to maintain positive states
- 2) Ability to recover from negative states
- 3) Ability to focus and avoid mind-wandering
- 4) Ability to be generous] (56)

- Mini-gospel message. Jesus willing to take on the sin of humanity - bearing its shame and awfulness - because of his great love for us - that sense that this had a larger purpose. For the JOY set before him, he endured the cross! And so -- we get eternal life...
- **Day 4's Theme: Jesus' Power Allows us to Live Forever!**

Matthew 13:44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then IN HIS JOY went and sold ALL HE HAD and bought that field.”

You can choose to LET GO OF EVERYTHING you've ever known -- for the BETTER THING you've JUST discovered -- and you will not regret it one bit. What a powerful promise! If anyone WANTS to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, come talk to any of us about how to ask God into your heart! He can transform you.

Weeping May Last for the Night	But Joy Comes In the Morning	(Psalm 30:5) Our fragility helps us discover the possibility of true joy. “Take the return of the prostate cancer -- well, it does focus the	5 references to weeping, 234 references to joy (especially in Psalms, Isaiah, Luke/John, the Epistles)
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Philippians 4: 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

“Discovering more joy does not, I’m sorry to say, save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily, too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreak without being broken.” (12) - Tutu

Simple practice based on The Book of Joy (342-345)

- a) Sit comfortably
- b) Take several long breaths thru your nose. Let your body relax. Notice as your body relaxes more and your heart feels lighter
- c) Let your problem come to mind
- d) Perspective - try to step back from yourself and your problem. Think about this problem from the future, from a year or a decade from now. Recognize your problem will pass. See it shrink as you see it in the wider context of your life.
- e) Humility - now see yourself as one of 7 billion people...and your problem as part of the pain and suffering so many people experience. See your problem as part of the unfolding drama of life on planet earth. See yourself from God’s perspective, as he looks down on the earth and sees you next to everyone else he loves. Let yourself feel love and appreciation for everyone who has helped you get to his point in your life.
- f) Humor - smile and see if you can chuckle at your problem, your shortcoming, your struggle. Try to find whatever humor there might be. Human drama is a comedy, and laughter is the saving grace. Accept life as it is, broken and imperfect, even as we aspire for a better life and better world.
- g) Acceptance - accept that you’re struggling and feeling limited. Remind yourself that hard stuff happens. That there’s nothing you can do to change the past. Say to yourself, “in order to make the most positive contribution to this situation, I must accept the reality of its existence.”
- h) Forgiveness. Place your hand on your heart and forgive yourself for whatever part you’ve played in creating this problem/situation. Recognize that you’re only human and will inevitably fall short of your aspirations. You will hurt and be hurt by others. See the humanity of others involved and forgive them for their part.
- i) Gratitude. Think of 3 or more things that you’re grateful for in this problem or in your life right now. Can you find ways in which your problem is actually contributing to your life and growth?
- j) Compassion - put your hand on your heart. Have compassion for yourself and for how you are struggling. Remember it takes time to grow and learn. You’re not perfect, but Jesus loves you in that place. There are going to be frustrations in life. Let God use them for good, refining you, shaping you, strengthening you.
- k) Generosity -- feel the deep generosity in your heart -- imagine it radiating to those around you. How can you give your gifts? How can you listen well to others? When we give joy to others, we experience true joy ourselves.