Godly Joy

(by Gary Henry)

***“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation”*** (**Habakkuk 3:18**).

WE OFTEN EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR OUR SORROW TO BE GODLY SORROW, BUT IS IT ANY LESS IMPORTANT FOR OUR JOY TO BE GODLY JOY? If it is dangerous for worldly thinking to infect our sorrow, is it any less of a problem when it jeopardizes our joy?

To begin with, what is it about godly joy that makes it “godly”? The answer is not hard to find. Just as godly sorrow is focused on God rather than self (it grieves what our sins have cost Him and not us), godly joy is also focused on God. It rejoices in whatever God rejoices about: the accomplishment of His purposes, the triumph of His cause, the redemption of those who have accepted His salvation, and, yes, even the carrying out of His justice.

I believe one prominent feature of godly joy is that it rejoices in the life-path that God lays out before us. That is, it finds joy in following the path that God indicates rather than the one we might have chosen. It genuinely rejoices in the accomplishment of God’s will, whatever that might mean for us personally. As Evelyn Underhill put it, *“This is the secret of joy. We shall no longer strive for our own way, but commit ourselves, easily and simply, to God’s way, acquiesce in his will, and in so doing find our peace.”*

Jesus is obviously the great example here. He experienced no greater joy than being a part of the fulfillment of His Father’s purposes, even when the role required of Him was painful and difficult. On one occasion, He said, ***“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work”*** (**John 4:34**). He derived more joy from obedience than most people get from a great meal.

Without the focus that Jesus had on the Father’s glory, joy tends to degenerate. It becomes the product of nothing more than the selfish indulgence of our desires, with little or no regard for whether that indulgence helps or hinders the outworking of God’s purposes in the world. And in the end, that kind of “joy” (if it even can be called that) is a distinctly unsatisfying thing. It leaves a dry, dusty taste in our mouths. But GODLY joy, that is a different thing altogether! When our joy is the overflowing of GOD’S joy, well, that is what Eden was about. And our Father has not given up on it.

“In Jesus’ Name, Amen”

(by David Maxson)

*"In Jesus’ name, Amen."* How many times have you said that phrase repeated at the end of a prayer? Thousands of times, right? How many times do you find that phrase at the end of a New Testament prayer? Zero. Not even a single time. That seems strange, doesn't it? Of all the recorded prayers we have in the New Testament, there is not a single time we see that phrase at the end.

I'm not arguing against saying this in prayer. In fact, I think this is a tremendous way to end our prayers (and begin, for that matter). What I am concerned about is ***"vain repetition"*** (**Matthew 6:7**). I fear that because we use this phrase so much that it can become a mindless formula. It is possible for us to pray something with our lips and not our hearts (**1 Corinthians 14:15**).

So I want us all to pause for a moment before the next time we pray. Let's stop and think about what we are doing when we pray *"in Jesus’ name."* When we do this we are calling on Jesus' authority. He is seated at the right hand of the Almighty God (**Hebrews 1:3**). He is above all rule, authority, power, and dominion (**Ephesians 1:21**). His name is exalted above every name (**Philippians 2:10**). He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (**Revelation 19:16**). He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, visible and invisible (**Colossians 1:16-17**). He rules in heaven with a rod of iron (**Revelation 19:15**). He is the Son of God (**John 1:34**).

In His name, we can boldly come before the throne (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). Meditate on this great and awesome thought before you approach our Father in prayer. *“Father, in the mighty name of Your only Son, Jesus Christ, we approach Your throne of grace in prayer!”*

**Eight Things I Want of You**

(by Lee Delbridge)

1.    I want you to be a true disciple of Jesus. That means you are saved, sanctiﬁed and serving. (**Matthew 28:18-20**; **John 8:31-32**)

2.    I want you to use the Bible as your guide for life. (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**; **Psalms 119:9-11**)

3.    I want you to discover your giftedness and life purpose. (**Proverbs 16:4**; **Ephesians 2:10**; **1 Peter 4:10-11**)

4.    I want you to take responsibility for your own life — being self-sufficient and independent. (**Ephesians 4:28**; **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**; **Galatians 6:4-5**)

5.    I want you to know how powerful your attitude is — not all powerful, but very powerful. (**Philippians 2:5**; **4:4-8**)

6.    I want you to understand money — work, give, save and spend. (**Ephesians 4:28**; **2 Thessalonians 3:10**; **Luke 6:38**; **Proverbs 22:7**)

7.    I want you to know that life is not always fair, but God is always in control. (**1 Corinthians 10:13**; **Romans 8:28**)

8.    I want you to know that actions have consequences. (**Proverbs 4:26**; **Galatians 6:7-9**)

UNITY

(selected)

**UNITY** is found when we work together for the common cause of Jesus Christ.

**UNITY** is when we speak the same thing. Do we have unity?

**UNITY** is when there are no divisions among us. Do we have unity?

**UNITY** is when we are perfectly joined together. Do we have unity?

**UNITY** is when we are joined together in the same mind. Do we have unity?

**UNITY** is when we are joined together in the same judgment. Do we have unity?

*Can we have* ***UNITY*** *today? Read* ***1 Corinthians 1:10*** *to find the answer!*