

“Rejoice Always”

...for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16,18



Introduction

If you are a follower of Christ, then chances are you want to be in the very centre of God's activity. You want divine direction for your life, and this is a really good thing. But often that simply translates into getting the various aspects of our life exactly right - what my career should be, who should I choose as a life partner, where should I live, where and how should I live out my calling (use my gifts, talents, abilities etc), how much should I spend on a car etc.

These are great questions to ask, but what if God's will looked more like shaping our lives around the life of Christ? What if it was about how we live out our life as “God chasers”? What if God's will defined our character more than our career? and who we are more than what we do?

Ice Breaker: What one thing in life brings you the most happiness?

Share (pick one or two to talk about with your group)

- Are you a “glass half full” or “glass half empty” type of person? (see next page for fun)
- What's the difference (if any) between happiness and joy for you?
- Read these passages: Phillipians 1:18; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:4. Remembering that Paul wrote these verses from prison, what themes do you detect running through these verses & what brings Paul joy?
- How do the above verses challenge and encourage you in your life to live a life of rejoicing? What changes need to occur for you to be characterised by “joy”?
- “Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.” Phillipians 3:1. Why do you think Paul's reminding the Phillipians to rejoice in the Lord is a safeguard for them?
- What situation are you in now that you find it difficult to rejoice in the Lord? What might rejoicing look like for you?
- Jesus rejoiced “in the Spirit ” (Luke 10:19-21). Joy is a something that the Spirit produces in us (Galatians 5:22). We are commanded to “rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16). How can our attempts to consciously live a life characterised by joy be beneficial to us, to others, and bring glory to God? Share some ideas of how we can live a joyous life.

Bottom Line: To “be cheerful no matter what” (MSG) seems an impossibility if we focus on our day to day circumstances, worries and challenges. Yet rejoicing requires us to apprehend what God is doing in us by His Spirit, and to choose joy over everything else. It will require that we adjust our point of focus, to look to Jesus and His purposes for our joy, and not at our happenings for our happiness. It's a habit! It's a gift! ... and you will be in the centre of God's will when you exercise joy...always!!

Now What?

- Memorise: “Rejoice Always” 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (yes! where you find it is important too)
- Pray for those who are struggling to find joy in their circumstances.
- Put a reminder in your phone to rejoice always every hour! Begin your day with praise & thanksgiving!!