



Happiness or Joy?

Today's HOPE (main point): I can have JOY in Jesus.

How many of you can sing, "If You're Happy and You Know It?" Let's sing the first verse...If you're happy and you know it clap your hands, if you're happy and you know it clap your hands. If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it, if you're happy and you know it clap your hands. (sing)

What did the song say...if you're happy and you know it, then your face...? Will surely show it! Now this may seem like a silly question, but how does your face show when you're happy? You smile, right?

I've got another song for you...what about the song, "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart." Let's sing the first verse of that song. I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart...." (sing)

I wanted us to sing those simple songs to help us think about the difference between happiness and joy. They are not the same thing! What is the difference between happiness and joy? (take answers)

Happiness depends on our circumstances, therefore it comes and goes based on our circumstances. Ecclesiastes 7:14 says, When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. So God knows that sometimes we will be happy, and sometimes we will be sad. And it's not wrong to be sad! There are truly some very awful things in this world that should make us sad! The death of a loved one, the loss of a pet, when a friend moves away, etc. Does anyone want to share when they've been really sad?

Happiness comes and goes like the smiles on our faces- but we can have JOY all the time, regardless of our circumstances, because joy is a condition of our heart.

Psalm 16:11 says, You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

And Psalm 19:8 says, The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

God puts joy in our heart! When we know Him, and when we obey Him, we have joy. So let's go back to some of those things we said made us sad. How could we have joy in those situations even when we were sad? (take answers....prompt if necessary....example, when a loved one dies, we can have joy that they are in heaven with Jesus if they were a believer and if they were not a believer, we can have joy that they were part of our lives here on earth; when a friend moves away we can have joy that God always knows just the right kind of friends to bring to us; when a pet dies, we can have joy in God's good gifts of animals and companionship....etc...)

Let's look at another Bible verse. It's from the story of Jesus' birth. Jesus had some visitors from far away, who had been searching for Him. Does anyone remember who they were? The wise men, the magi.

Matthew's gospel tells us, When they saw the star, they rejoiced *exceedingly with great joy*. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-11 ESV)

The wise men only knew a very little about Jesus and yet they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. With all that we know about Jesus today, shouldn't our joy be even greater? Jesus is the source of all joy because He is God's greatest gift to us and the ultimate promise fulfilled.

John 3:16-17 says it best. Who can say it with me? For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

When we start to let our joy slip away and we get too focused on the circumstances around us, we simply need to look to Jesus and be reminded of how He came to save us!

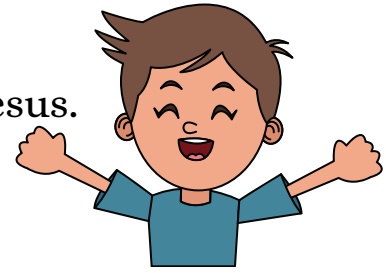
I'm going to read this prayer and if you agree with it, you may read it with me the second time.

Prayer: Father, I thank you that you loved me so much that you sent Jesus to save me from my sins. Whenever I start to feel sad, help me to remember Jesus and be filled with joy. My circumstances may change, Lord, but You never change! Fill me with joy and your love and may it spill out to all those around me. Amen.



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Amazing Grace

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.
4. When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun!

Blessed Assurance

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his
blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with his goodness, lost in his
love.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

'Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus

1. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take him at his word,
Just to rest upon his promise,
And to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him
How I've proved him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus
O for grace to trust him more.

2. I'm so glad I learned to trust him,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that he is with me,
Will be with me to the end.

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him
How I've proved him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus
O for grace to trust him more.

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

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Amen.