



When Ordinary People Are Filled With Joy

Life-Link Study #5

INTRODUCTION

In the last few studies, we have been looking at what happens when ordinary people connect with an extraordinary God. The Bible is full of their stories. Think of Peter and John – ordinary uneducated fishermen, Elisha - a man ‘just like us’ and the Israelites – a group of people whose lives were full of trial and mistakes. These were all normal people who experienced the highs and lows of everyday life, but learnt that God can make our lives extraordinary when we connect with him.

In today’s study, we will look at what can happen when ordinary people are filled with joy!

A. THE POWER OF JOY

1. Read Nehemiah 8:10 and Proverbs 17:22. What difference does joy make?
2. The bible advises, “...Rejoice evermore.” Even doctors recommend a good laugh as a way of staying healthy. Joy reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and boosts the immune system. Why do you think joy is good for you?

B. EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

1. Jesus’ mission was a difficult one – at times too difficult to bear. How did Jesus maintain his joy? Read Luke 10:21, Hebrews 1:9 and Hebrews 12:2.
2. Paul’s life was full of difficulty and heartache. You can read a summary of his hardships in 2 Corinthians 11:24-27. How did Paul maintain joy? (Read 2 Corinthians 12:9).
3. Suppose a friend has been going through a difficult time. They have been reading Philippians 4:4, but are questioning how it is possible to apply it to their life. What would be your advice?
4. How would you answer someone who suggests that joyfulness is a personality trait – easier for some than others?

C. HOW TO LIVE JOYFULLY

Read through Psalm 126. This was a song sung by the exiles when they had returned from Babylon to their home in the Promised Land. After waiting for seventy long years in a foreign land, God had finally fulfilled His promises to bring them back. It was a great time of celebration!

But once they arrived home, they were faced with major challenges. The projects to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem were fraught with opposition and hardship. This song is a prayer for the fortunes of their homeland to be restored.

1. How did the exiles face the difficult times they were in?
2. The words we speak in faith are essential to living joyfully – even in the midst of difficult circumstances. What was the *confession* of the people in this Psalm? (v.5-6)
3. How does sowing in a time of tears bring a harvest of joy? (v.5-6)
Referring to Osas’ message on Sunday, in order to experience God’s joy in our lives, it is important to take responsibility for our thoughts, our words and our actions. God’s promise is to work all things together for good (Romans 8:28) and we can be assured that just like the exiles, he will bring us returning from our sorrow with songs of joy!

REFLECTION AND ACTION

Reflect: How do you need to adjust your thoughts and your words to line up with the promise of God today?

Act: What actions of generosity and kindness can you do for others?

Pray: That God will fill your heart with the strength and joy of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER POINT - EX:FUND 25 PROJECT

We have started to occupy our new venue and there seem to be more need to bring our home and God's house to a more habitable state. There are those who have given and there are those who are willing to give even more; there are those who have made a weekly commitment and there are those also who would do everything to go above and beyond their commitments.

My prayer for you is, "... [God] Who provides seed for the sower and bread for eating will also provide and multiply your [resources for] sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness [which manifests itself in active goodness, kindness, and charity]." 2 Cor. 9:10 (AMP)

*Remember, "...And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always *and* under all circumstances *and* whatever the need be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation]." 2 Cor.9:8 (AMP)*