

## - Digging Deeper -

For personal and small group study

Week of September 27, 2009

- Once our spirit has been regenerated, we then are aware of our guilt and desperate need for God's grace.
- When you actually connect with God in worship with your spirit, you will not walk away the same way you came.
- By taking our eyes off **ourselves** and putting them on our forgiving God, we clear the way for authentic **joy** to be restored within.
- A striking feature of worship in the Bible is that people gathered in "holy expectancy" to encounter their awe-inspiring God.

*"I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without practicing the presence of God." ~ Brother Lawrence*

- How do you prepare yourself to come to encounter God Almighty?  
**Psalm 29:2 (BBE)** "Give to the Lord the full glory of his name; give him worship in holy robes."
- How you prepare, even the clothes you wear, reflect the level of respect and how you feel about the person you expect to meet.
- Begin to **position** yourself to **encounter** God before you plan to enter into worship at home or church.
- Expect to hear God's voice; plan time to quiet your mind and emotions beforehand; get decent sleep Saturday night, etc.

### 3. WITNESSING

**Luke 24:49 (NLT)** "... stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

**Acts 1:8 (NLT)** "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere ..."

- Witnessing with Holy Spirit power injects an energy and indescribable **joy**.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you to share your faith with someone at least twice a month.
- Spiritual exercises are not designed to suck life and joy out of you, but rather to ignite real joy within you.
- God's joy comes as you literally begin to walk **closer to Him** than you do with your best friend, even your spouse or parents.  
**Nehemiah 8:10** "... the **joy of the Lord** is your strength."
  - His joy will sustain you when you face tragedies or confusing times, and will help you come out on the other side victorious.

1. Which of the disciplines, or cards from the "Energy Pack", have most impacted or challenged you so far? How? Take time to share a relevant spiritual discipline story from a previous week, or one you have recently remembered.
2. It has been said that a gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms. If true ... how can the spiritual practices of celebration, worship and witnessing help develop the fruit of the Spirit, joy, in your journey toward being Christ-centered? [Discuss cards 13-15 in your "Energy Pack." Next, in groups of two or three, prepare an action plan that you will all do in the coming week. Next week, come prepared to share the results.]  
  
Who do you know who really celebrates life? What attracts you to them?
3. We are a people plagued by "hurry sickness", and hurry causes great harm to our spiritual growth and robs our joy. What are some other "joy robbers" that you face in your life? As you exercise your spiritual muscles in celebration, worship and witnessing, how is your relationship with God being affected?
4. What is your response to this quote by Robert Louis Stevenson: "*To miss the joy is to miss everything*"? How does a lack of joy impact your attitude, your relationship with others and with God? If joy is a command; not an option -- how can you intentionally respond to it? [Philippians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 5:16-18]  
  
What is the heart of worship, and how does it affect your joy? What moves you to worship? How is worship more than feelings? [Matthew 6:33; 15:8, 18; John 4:24; Psalm 2:11]
5. See Nehemiah 8:9-12, 17; Psalm 37:4; James 1:2-6. Discuss what you sense God is saying to you through these scriptures. According to God's Word, what are some methods/disciplines God uses to provide joy in our lives? Share a personal story of how God has brought joy through an unexpected circumstance.  
  
How does witnessing for Jesus bring joy? Where does the strength to witness come from? [Acts 1:8; 4:13]
6. Read Romans 12:1-2; Luke 15:6-7 and John 15:1-11. Write down all of God's sources of joy you find in these verses. What is God's Word saying about joy and how to find it? What new thing did you learn about joy through this study? ... about celebration? ... about worship? ... about witnessing? What do you plan to do with your new insights?

# Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you worshipping with us today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

## Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

## Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

## Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

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We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

September 27, 2009

## FUEL FOR THE JOURNEY - 3

John 15:11

Are you plagued with this malady -- failure to celebrate what God has accomplished through you?

### THREE PROVEN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES THAT WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR JOURNEY

#### 1. CELEBRATION

- There's a direct connection between heartfelt celebration of God's goodness and greatness in the midst of suffering and fears, and in building and maintaining a healthy faith in God.

- Unsanitary faith is the root cause of why so many Christians grumble, are against everything, find fault, etc.

**James 4:1 (HCSB)** "What is **the source** of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from the cravings that are at war **within** you?"

- God is joy, and He is most glorified when you find your greatest pleasure in Him. Jesus came as a joy-giver.

**John 15:11 (NLT)** "I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy."

**Psalms 37:4** "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."

**Philippians 4:4** "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!**"

- If we are full of joy in Christ, **sin** loses its attraction and strength to tempt us.

- Our desire for joy isn't wrong; God put it in you. Our problem is that we are choosing to drink from the dirty fountain instead of the clean one.

- The happy man is **not** the one who has the most, but the one who **needs** the least.

**Matthew 18:3 (God's Word)** "I can guarantee this truth: Unless you **change** and become like **little children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

#### 2. WORSHIP

- Worship is your spirit's reverent, joy-filled response to the awesomeness of God, and gratitude for all the various forms of love and grace He gives.

**John 4:24** "God is spirit, and his worshipers **must** worship in **spirit** and in truth."