

Overflowing with His Joy
By Rick Ezell

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them” (John 17:13 NIV).

Joy has ever been one of the most significant hallmarks of God’s people. Joy is the product of a Christ-relationship. Yet it remains conspicuously absent in many Christians. Why? Why does the fullness of joy elude even the most committed Christians?

I love how an old British educator defined joy: “Joy is the flag which is flown from the castle of the heart when the King is in residence there.” Think about that definition. Joy is the result of a relationship with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If Jesus is King and Lord, in other words, he is in control, then what do we have to worry about. If joy is a flag that we fly indicating that Jesus is in our hearts, when we come into a room or when we are in phone conversations can people tell that Jesus is in our hearts by the joy on our face and the happiness in our voice?

Jesus prays that we will have this disposition, this attitude, this confidence in our lives. He is praying for joy in our lives. But, and this is an important question, whose joy is it?

Look closely at John 17:13 for the answer. Did you notice the personal pronoun before the word *joy*? This joy that we are talking about is not ours; it is Jesus’. It is one of his gifts to us. Don’t confuse ownership with stewardship. Just as in all of life, joy is a gift from Jesus. He is the source of joy. It is this joy he gives to us.

When he gives it to us, how much joy does he give? Jesus prays that we will have “the full measure of his joy.” Jesus is not stingy. Like with all of his gifts to us, he wants to give in overflowing, superabundant proportions. The idea of full measure often communicated as an overflowing cup was a symbol for total satisfaction. It means, “I’ve got everything I need.” When someone gives one a cup that is full measure or overflowing, it means that they’re wasting something—water or wine. One doesn’t waste water or wine in the desert unless one’s got more than they need. Jesus wastes his joy on us. He wants us to have joy in a brimming over supply.

It is this joy that he gives to us. The “they” and the “them” in this verse are the followers of Jesus. To have his joy one must be in relationship with Jesus. Only the followers of Jesus can receive the gift of his joy. Remember Jesus is praying for his disciples—then and now. Only believers can be the answer to Jesus’ prayer. When we look at the totality of this prayer we see the impending result is joy. Everything that Jesus prayed for was designed to bring us joy.

The question is: do you have it? Are you experiencing Jesus’ joy? If not, here’s how to get it.

Live in close contact with Jesus. If Jesus is a man of joy, then get close to him. Haven’t you ever noticed that certain people bring a life, an energy, a happiness, a joy to a room. Jesus was that kind of person. We have been led to believe that joy is found in stuff and things; but the reality is that joy is found a person and a relationship.

Joy comes through prayer, but don't be quick to ask for it when you pray. Joy comes in the presence of Jesus. So bask in his presence. The Shorter Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" We answer, "The chief end of man is to worship God and enjoy him forever." We tend to be too quick in our prayers and too fast with our worship. Slow it down. It is in the time with God that we become joyful, and become the answer to Jesus' prayer.

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