



JOYCE MEYER
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THE LOST ART OF ENJOYING LIFE

Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

Joyce Meyer Ministries

Nanakramguda

Hyderabad - 500 008

Andhra Pradesh

INDIA

91-40-2300 6777

www.jmmindia.org

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Lost Art of
**Enjoying
Life**

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Joyce Meyer Ministries
P.O. Box 655 • Fenton, MO 63026
636-349-0303 • 1-800-727-WORD (9673)
www.joycemeyer.org

THE LOST ART OF ENJOYING LIFE

Does God Approve Of People Enjoying Their Lives?

I. Does God Approve Of People Enjoying Their Lives?

A. **John 10:10** – The thief came only to kill, steal, and destroy; but Jesus said, “I came that you may have and ENJOY life.”

1. Jesus said, **“Be”** – to exist; “I Am,” to exist in a certain place, a specified position, to belong; “Peace be unto you.”
2. The devil says, **“Do”** – perform, execute, fulfill, complete, produce, bring about, exert, work out, solve, and to meet the requirements of.
 - a. **Philippians 1:6** – Complete.
 - b. **John 6:28-29** – Believe.
 - c. **Philippians 2:12-14** – Work out.

HUMAN BEING – NOT HUMAN DOING

B. **John 17:13** – Jesus said He wanted “His joy” to be made full and complete and perfect in them (us), and for us to **experience** His delight that His **enjoyment** would be perfected in our souls – that His gladness would be filling our hearts.

1. We should **experience** joy in our daily lives – not just talk, but possession.

- C. Definitions:
1. Joy – Great pleasure, delight.
 2. Enjoy – To have the use or benefit of; the use of something beneficial.
 3. Gladness – Pleased, a cheerful disposition, feeling and/or displaying joy.
- D. **John 15:1-11** – Jesus speaks of “abiding” and then says He has told them about abiding so that their joy and gladness might be of full measure, complete, and overflowing.

II. Abiding And Joy

- A. Abide (defined) – **Of place**, to continue or stay. To dwell, live, remain. To cleave or cling to.
1. Jesus is our resting place. We have joy when we stay in our place – get out of place and confusion reigns rather than peace.

Peace is extremely important because it leaves one free to enjoy.
- B. The “misbelief” is that problem-free days are the only ones we may enjoy.
1. **John 16:33** – Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation; but **cheer up!** For I have overcome the world.”
 2. Peace in the midst of the storm is ours.
 3. **Philippians 3:10** – That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection that lifts me out from among “the dead” while I am in the body. Those dead are breathing but lifeless and without joy.

4. Joy in the midst of trouble:
 - a. **James 1:2** – *Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations.*
 - b. **II Corinthians 7:4** – *I have great boldness and free and fearless confidence and cheerful courage toward you; my pride in you is great. I am filled [brimful] with the comfort [of it]; with all our tribulation and in spite of it, [I am filled with comfort] I am overflowing with joy.*

C. During trouble, do what you can do and what God allows – and then **STAND** or **ABIDE**.

1. **Ephesians 6:13-14** – *Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and **stand** your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to **stand** [firmly in your place]. **Stand** therefore [hold your ground], having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right **standing** with God . . .*

DO NOT TAKE ON A FALSE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY!

III. A False Sense Of Responsibility

- A. It says you should at least worry and fret.
 1. It would be totally unspiritual to ENJOY yourself while you “enter God’s rest and allow Him to solve your problems.”
- B. It says you should run from person to person, getting advice because you **must do** something.
- C. It says you must figure it out and be prepared to tell people what you are going to do, or they will think you are not responsible.

- D. This also operates in such a way that it tries to burden you with things concerning other people and their problems.
 - 1. You “feel” that you should be doing something all the time to solve the problems.
 - 2. These lies and out-of-balance feelings are the work of demons.

IV. The Battle Belongs To The Lord.

- A. **II Chronicles 20:15-22** – They were rejoicing and having a great time because they believed God was solving their problem.

- 1. They were “in their place.”

- B. Seated in heavenly places with Christ

- 1. **Ephesians 2:6** – He made us to sit down with Him.
 - 2. Being seated with Him means to **enter rest**.
 - 3. **Colossians 3:1-3** – If you are seated, then follow through and get your mind off the problem.

The world’s way to solve the problem is not your way. As far as this world is concerned, you have died and are risen to a fresh, new living way. (See **Hebrews 10:20**.)

- C. When you are not enjoying life, **sit down and get back in your place**.

V. God Is Working.

- A. **I Thessalonians 2:13** – When you start believing, He starts working.

- 1. **Hebrews 4:3** – Believing produces rest.
 - 2. **Romans 15:13** – Believing produces joy and peace.

**MAY THE GOD OF YOUR HOPE SO FILL YOU
WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING.**

God Is Not For Sale

I. Receiving Versus Getting

A. **Luke 18:17** – We must accept and welcome the kingdom as a little child.

1. Children have no problem receiving what they don't deserve or have not earned in some way.

B. We attempt to “get” what God wants to “give” freely.

1. A “free gift” must be “received.” It cannot be ENJOYED any other way.

C. **Colossians 2:6** – The same way you **received** Christ, you should live your life.

1. Receive (defined) – To act as a receptacle or a container; to permit to enter; believe; to welcome.
2. Get (defined) – To come into possession of; to obtain, to go after and obtain; to take by force or seize; to acquire as a result of action or effort.

D. Examples from Scripture:

1. **Receive** the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask and **receive** that your joy may be full.
3. **Receive** the Word with meekness.
4. As many as **received** and welcomed Him, He gave power to become the Sons of God.
5. **Receive** forgiveness of sins.
6. **Receive** the grace of God.

7. **Receive** your inheritance.
8. **Receive** mercy for our failures.
9. **Receive** the result of your faith.
10. **Receive** all the good things God has created with thanksgiving.
11. Comment on how people struggle to “get the Holy Spirit,” struggle to make prayer sound eloquent, and struggle to deserve forgiveness by “guilt feelings.”

GUILT IS OUR WAY OF PAYING FOR OUR MISTAKES.

- E. Freely you have received, freely give.
 1. If you are legalistic with yourself, you will also be legalistic with others.

II. The Thief

- A. **John 10:10** – The thief comes to steal your ability to **ENJOY**.
 1. **RELIGION** is “the thief.”
 2. Satan sees religion – Jesus offers relationship.
- B. **John: Chapter 9** – The boy born blind did not **deserve** healing in the eyes of the Pharisees.
- C. **Romans 4:4** – A person who earns is not thankful; he feels he **deserves** his wages.
 1. Earning (works) and deserving belong to Satan’s system.
 2. Asking for what you could never deserve and receiving it with grateful hearts is God’s system.

III. The Nature Of Mercy

- A. God is merciful; His mercy endures forever. He is long-suffering and slow to anger. He is forgiving. This is His nature.
 - 1. He wants this to be our nature. It never will be unless we learn to receive it from God – and until we receive mercy from God, we can't give it away.
- B. **Matthew 12:7** – Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice.
 - 1. **Verses 1-10** – Jesus is trying to teach them liberty. Satan is always around to accuse.
- C. **Hebrews 4:15-16** – Come to the throne of grace and receive mercy for your failures.
- D. **John 1:16** – *For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share, and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped] upon gift.*

Out of His fullness we have all **received**.
- E. **Isaiah 55:1** – Come and buy without money. The price in God's economy is self-surrender that accepts (receives) the blessing.

IV. Grace Versus Works Of The Law

- A. **John 6:28-29** – Believing is the work of God.
- B. **Galatians 3:10** – Those who depend on the Law are doomed to disappointment.
 - 1. **I Peter 5:5b** – Why? God Himself opposes you until you learn to lean on Him.
- C. **Galatians 4:21-5:1** – The fruit of works never produces joy.

1. Joy is only found in waiting for the promise.

D. Isaac and Ishmael

1. **Genesis 16:11-12**

Ishmael (a man of war) – his name meant
God hears your affliction.

2. **Genesis 17:19**

Isaac – “Laughter”

E. **Isaiah 54:1-3** – One barren of their own works will have many spiritual children.

1. Fruit born of the Spirit with joy and enjoyment

Seven Commandments Of Contentment

Foundation Scriptures:

Romans 8:26-28 – Thou shalt believe all things work together for good.

I. Seven Commandments Of Contentment

- A. Contentment (defined) – Satisfied.
- B. **Philippians 4:11-13** – Paul is content apart from circumstances.
 - 1. Can't enjoy life if enjoyment is based on circumstances.
- C. **I Timothy 6:6-10** – Craving for more breeds discontentment.
- D. **Hebrews 13:5** – Be satisfied each step of the way. God won't fail you.
 - 1. Certain personalities are harder to keep contented.

II. Thou Shalt Not Dread.

- A. **Philippians 3:13** and **Isaiah 43:18-19** – Regrets and dreads
 - 1. Drains life
 - 2. Steals **NOW**
- B. Sacred versus secular

1. **Ecclesiastes 2:24-25** – *There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make himself enjoy good in his labor. Even this, I have seen, is from the hand of God. For who can eat or who can have **enjoyment** any more than I can – apart from Him?*

The stronghold of religion causes you to only feel content when you are doing something labeled “spiritual.”

C. Work versus play

1. Don't divide your life into categories.
2. **I Corinthians 10:31** – Do **ALL** for the glory of God.
3. **I Timothy 6:17** – God gives us **ALL** things richly to enjoy.

III. Thou Shalt Live Here And Now.

A. **NOW** faith is.

B. Are you living your life preparing and planning to **really live** and **enjoy later**?

1. Enjoy life now!

C. Enjoy **yourself now**.

1. Don't wait for perfection.
2. Enjoy the glory you are in.
3. **Philippians 1:6** – He began and He will finish. Don't fail to enjoy the middle.
4. Spend some money **now**.
5. Beware of idealizing the future – it leads to disappointment.

D. **Matthew 6:34** – Worry steals enjoyment.

1. Can't enjoy until all my problems are solved.

John 16:33 – When they are solved, you will get new ones.

2. Can't enjoy until my children and even friends get their problems solved.

3. Beware of a rescuer mentality and beware of taking on a false sense of responsibility.

IV. **Thou Shalt Not Hurry.**

A. Hurrying through things prevents **enjoying** them.

B. Eternal rhythm – God's pace

C. Don't allow life to be a blur.

1. Do less and enjoy more.

D. Hurry causes great frustration.

V. **Thou Shalt Not Take Thyself Too Seriously.**

A. Don't be overly concerned with your faults.

1. Learn to laugh at yourself.

B. **Romans 8:28-34** – Predestined to be conformed into His image

1. Being rigid, legalistic, and uptight will retard the process.

C. Remember "weakness" is an inherent trait of the flesh.

1. Don't be too (excessively) hard on yourself.

VI. Thou Shalt Be Grateful.

- A. Gratitude is a source of joy and enjoyment.
 - 1. Remember those who are discontent are not **enjoying** life.
- B. Think on and talk about what you have not.
- C. What you are full of, you must feed on.
 - 1. Beware of grumbling, faultfinding, and complaining.
 - 2. **I Peter 3:10** – *For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days [good – whether apparent or not] keep his tongue free from evil and his lips from guile (treachery, deceit).*

VII. Thou Shalt Not Be Selfish.

- A. Let the world see you walking in love.
 - 1. **Philippians 4:4-5** – Rejoice! Let your unselfishness be seen.

John 13:34-35 – A new command: love one another. By this shall all men know (keep on showing love).
 - 2. **I John 3:14** – He who does not love is kept in death.
 - 3. **I Timothy 5:6** – She who is selfish is dead even while she still lives.
- B. Love – Spiritual warfare
 - 1. **Matthew 24:12** – Love grows cold because of dealing with our problems.
 - a. Can't solve own problems
 - b. Can solve someone else's

2. **I John 5:4** – This is the victory – **FAITH**.
 - a. **Galatians 5:6** – **Faith** works by love.
 - b. **Ephesians 6:16** – Lift up shield of **faith** with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the enemy.
 3. When having problems, continue being a blessing.
 - a. **Galatians 6:9-10** – “Do good.”
 - b. **Psalms 37:3** – Trust and “do good.”
- C. Keep tongue free from evil.
1. **I Peter 3:8-10** – Walk in love, and be careful how you talk about people so **YOU** can enjoy your life.
 2. **Ephesians 4:29-31** – When the Holy Spirit is grieved, we sense the grieving in us and we lose joy.
- Proverbs 18:21** – *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].*

Laboring In Vain

I. Vain (Useless) Labor

- A. **Psalm 127:1** – Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.
 - 1. Some spend life climbing the ladder of success only to discover their ladder is leaning against the wrong building.
- B. **Jeremiah 2:13** – Digging empty wells
- C. **Matthew 11:28** – Come to Me all who labor, and I will give you rest.

II. Why, God, Why? (Reasoning)

- A. **Proverbs 3:5-7** – Lean not to your own understanding.
 - 1. Causes confusion
 - 2. Blocks discernment
- B. **Isaiah 55:8-9** – His ways and thoughts are above ours.
 - 1. **Proverbs 20:24** – *Man's steps are ordered by the Lord. How then can a man understand his way?*
 - 2. **Jeremiah 10:23** – Even a strong man does not have it in him to run his own life.
- C. We must let God be God and trust when we don't understand.
 - 1. Be content to “know the One Who knows.”

III. Man Craves Knowledge.

- A. Knowing makes us feel secure and in control.
 - 1. **I Corinthians 1:19** – Can't trust your knowledge.
 - 2. **I Corinthians 2:2** – Paul wanted to know only Christ and nothing else.
- B. The difference is knowledge and wisdom.
 - 1. Knowledge – from head
Wisdom – from Spirit
 - 2. **James 1:5** – If you lack wisdom in trials, ask!
- C. The mind should be enlightened by the Spirit.
 - 1. Spirit and mind work closely together.

IV. Trust Brings Rest, Joy, And Peace.

- A. **I Peter 2:23** – Jesus trusted Himself and everything to Him Who judges fairly.
- B. But God, it is not fair. Why me?
 - 1. **John 21:21** – Peter learns he has suffering ahead and wants to know – what about John?
 - 2. **Luke 22:55-56** – Peter caught and recognized as a disciple
Why him? He needed it! God had big plans for Peter, but Peter needed work.
- C. Joseph
 - 1. Fair? Thirteen years in prison for something he did not do

2. Why? God knows things we don't know.
3. Joseph was immature. God refined him, tested and tried him, and prepared him for leadership.
4. **Isaiah 45:9** – Shall the clay say, “What do you think you are making?”
5. **Isaiah 45:11** – Would you question Me concerning My works?

V. When, God, When?

- A. Do you wait well?
 1. You will spend more time in your life waiting than receiving!
 2. Learn to enjoy every phase of development concerning your dreams, visions, calls, appointments, and giftings.
 3. Everything starts with a seed.

B. Due time: **Galatians 6:9** and **I Peter 5:6**

C. Appointed time:

Habakkuk 2:3 (Living Bible) – *But these things I plan won't happen right away .Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!*

1. God is not late, but He is not usually early.
 2. Waiting stretches us into new realms of faith.
- D. **Psalm 31:15** – *My times are in Your hands . . .*

Remember: Simple childlike faith brings joy! **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

