

NOBLE MARITIME

Ministries

No photos this month since all were lost on the hard drive that crashed!
Please pray with us for a speedy recovery! ☺

April 2010

Are You Joy Impaired?

(Inspired by this month's Leadership Development Program (LDP) subject: Hope and Joy)

Our mentor says with a chuckle that he used to be "joy impaired". Can you relate? I am amazed to be discovering how important joy is to my Lord. As His ambassador, it is vital that I understand and agree heartily with His values if I'm to be a true representative, and I haven't been fully appreciating the value He places on JOY! I know that "a merry heart is like good medicine" (Prov. 17:22) but thankfully, I am seldom sick so who really needs it?!

Why pursue JOY?

It is one of God's core values! If you watch for the subject in scripture you'll encounter it very frequently. Hebrews 1:3 says of Jesus that He is "the perfect imprint and the very image of God's nature" and then in verse 9, "God has anointed You [Jesus] with the oil of **exultant joy and gladness** above and beyond Your companions." Don't you find it interesting that **exultant joy and gladness** is describing the very image of God's nature? What do you imagine 'exultant joy' looking like?

We can sense that joy is one of the highest aspirations Jesus had for His disciples, reading in His last earthly prayer to the Father: "I say these things...so that **My joy** may be made full and complete and perfect in them [that they may experience **My delight** fulfilled in them, that **My enjoyment** may be perfected in their own souls, that they may have **My gladness** within them, filling their hearts]." John 17:13 Amplified

What is JOY?

Joy is a manifestation of trust (faith); an emotion He wants us to experience **flowing out from correct thinking about Him**. Fullness of Joy that **comes from being in His presence** (vs. doing or having done) is based on a revelation of

Continued on pg. 2

NEWS

Just after writing the first draft of this letter, Kathy's computer crashed so we lost everything necessary for editing and publishing a newsletter, including addresses and photos! Then she got food poisoning and was out of commission for a few days. At the same time, the furnace broke so we had no hot water or heat... We've been a bit side-tracked! So, as we dwell on God's goodness and the fact that we have such wonderful friends who don't complain about a late letter, we are laughing at the timing of it all... just when God wants us to talk about joy in all circumstances!

We are really feeling like a family ministry team here with Josh home between YWAM assignments. It's wonderful having him around!

Betsy and Josh were in Mexico City for 10 days on a film shoot. They managed to avoid the drug cartels and earthquake. Betsy assisted Josh as camera assistant and Spanish translator!

Another new Theophostic Basic training group has started up in Seattle and is requesting coaching and prayer counseling sessions for their group. We get excited about multiplication, training and equipping others to do what we do!

Rejoicing ~ One of our faithful monthly supporters works with an organization called 'Mission Increase Foundation' (www.missionincrease.org), whose purpose is to train and equip small non-profits to grow wisely, especially in the area of fund raising. They have a wonderful practice of matching their employees' personal yearly contributions to non-profits! So, we were the grateful beneficiaries of a generous and unexpected gift from Mission Increase because of our friend's support! Wow! We were blown away! Thank you Lord!

His goodness; and it is a gift, a by-product or a fruit of relationship. Also, joy may not be dignified. The apostles were thought to be drunk as they loudly extolled the Good News in Acts 2! In the past, I have regarded joy as having the occasional and momentary inner happiness based on having most of “my ducks in a row” (i.e., circumstances, relationships, work list, or whatever I value as high priority in good standing, if not nearly perfect). Not so. That isn't describing a “fruit of the Spirit”. That is performance-based spirituality or self-righteousness and very vulnerable to outside influences.

How do I get JOY?

You mean to tell me all I have to do is seek His presence, soak in His love for me, love Him back, dwell on (think on, keep my mind focused on) His goodness, practice thankfulness and I will receive full JOY? Gee, it sounds too easy, like that ‘unmerited favor’ gift program again, similar to salvation, righteousness, faith, grace etc.! Yes, exactly!

What hinders JOY?

As with most other blockages of walking in freedom and power, hindrances to joy come from faulty thinking. For example:

1. Continuing to believe joy will show up “when all my ducks are in a row” or, when I’ve done enough.
2. Thinking that joy is not important or valuable (forgetting “that for the **joy** set before Him, Christ endured the cross”!)
3. Believing that joy is only deserving of those who work hard, maintain a serious outlook and/or serve others at great personal sacrifice.
4. Feeling worthless, purposeless, abandoned, forgotten and as if I don’t have anything to offer the world’. (On the cross Jesus purchased joy so that He could exchange it for your “spirit of heaviness”. Is. 61:3)
5. Allowing the cares and heaviness of life, the fear of making ends meet, and trying to do everything right choke out what little time and energy I have to sit in the presence of God. (‘In Your presence there is fullness of **joy**...’ Ps 16:11)
6. Dwelling on (focusing on and rehearsing in my thoughts) every prayer that *hasn’t* been answered, everything God *hasn’t* done, and every disappointment He *could have* saved me from experiencing.

Any of these sound familiar? Like old tapes set on ‘repeat’, continually playing in your head? It’s time for us to renew our mind, get rid of the old tapes and begin to dwell on what good things God has done in our past and expect that that will continue in our future. Kathy & I started a list of all the miracles we could remember that God has done for us in our 25 years of marriage. It was overwhelming to see how quickly the page filled up! We will keep adding to it as we remember more. Do you want to join us and do the same?

My resolution and declaration is this: I refuse to let my unknown **future** limit my **present** joy - based on my **past** experience of His Goodness. I choose to focus (fix my mind) on His goodness and faithfulness and **enjoy** the richness of relationship with Him. Oh Lord, may we all experience more of what David expressed: *“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore!” Ps 16:11*

To those of you who made it all the way to the end of this article,
God Bless You! To the rest of you...oh, never mind! ☺

Love to you all, **Neil & Crew**

