

Advent: Joy

Day One Difference

There is a difference between the world's joy and the Christian's joy. To find out more about this, check out the article below:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-is-christian-joy-different-from-the-worlds>

Verses: Colossians 2:8-10, Acts 2:28, 2 Corinthians 1:24

Prayer Topics: Reality, True Riches, Wholeness

Day 2 Working at Joy

How can God command us to be joyful? How do we pursue the joy that many Christians seem to lack? Check out this great article for some answers that may surprise you:

<https://emerge.org/12-ways-to-increase-your-joy/>

Verses: Philippians 4:4, Luke 15:8-10, John 15:10-11

Prayer Topics: Effort, Practice, Attitude

Day 3

Backwards

We often think that the path to greater joy is to think about ourselves more. We are told to engage in self-care, to center ourselves, and to actualize ourselves. We think that if we truly know what we want, we will be able to be happy, and that we must learn to insist on getting what we want or we will be miserable. The bible does not frame the problem in this way. What is the path of joy? Check out this article to be enlightened:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/humility-is-not-hating-yourself>

Verses: Philippians 2:8-11, Hebrews 12:2, James 4:6

Prayer Topics: Selflessness, Community, Kindness

Day 4

Beware

What steals our joy as Christians? What should we be on the lookout for, and what should we avoid? Check out this great article for some things to beware of:

<https://ministry127.com/christian-living/what-robs-the-christian-s-joy>

Verses: John 16:22, Philippians 4:4-7, Psalm 68:19

Prayer Topics: Devotion, Submission, Contentment

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

“So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light,” Luke 16:8. I know this passage doesn’t deal directly with joy, however, there’s a truth that needs addressing to encourage us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus and not to settle for mediocrity. God didn’t establish His church in Christ Jesus to be mediocre and influenced by the ills of this world order. This passage of Scripture tells us the unjust steward

used the means/tools available to him so that his master wouldn't take a complete loss on his investment. The servant knew the master he worked for had expectations. Just like the unjust steward knew his master had expectations God also has expectations for His children called by His name. David said it like this, "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him," Psalm 62:5. For our expectation to come from God we must be in relationship with God in and through Christ Jesus therefore there must be a knowledge of God that's lived out, Proverbs 1:7. Because God created all called by His name for good works God has expectations as to how to participate with Him in His redemptive plan. God's way of attracting people to Himself is different from the practices of this world order. There are benefits God gives when we're in relationship with Him.

I want to encourage you to read Psalm 103, but, I want to focus on vs. 2 which says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. The benefits God gives us in Christ Jesus develops us, transforming us into the image and likeness of Christ Jesus so that we're presented mature in Him by the renewing of our mind, Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26. God transforms us to attract people to Himself because He desires that none perish but all come to repentance 2 Peter 3:9. One of the gifts that God gives us in and through Christ Jesus is joy which is a strength even though most people understand joy as an emotion, Nehemiah 8:10; Hebrews 12:2. John, influenced by the Holy Spirit recorded in the gospel and epistle he wrote, talks about the importance of knowing Jesus increases our joy, 1 John 1:4; John 15:11, 17:13. David in Psalm tells us that in the presence of God is the fullness of joy, Psalm 16:11. The joy of the Lord is a direct result of abiding in Christ Jesus because He is joy and joy comes from Him. If you desire to be contagious for Christ Jesus, get you some joy by sitting at the feet of Jesus and exercising your

faith because truth is only in Him and Him alone.