

## BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

8/15/2010

### **It's All About How You Wake Up!**

Did you know that you can tell what kind of day you are going to have by what you do in the first few moments of being awake? Some people don't believe that, but it's a proven fact. Sleep gives our brains the much needed opportunity to recalibrate, so that we can awaken with a new and fresh perspective in the morning. Psalms 30:5 (NIV) backs this up. It says *"His anger lasts for a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may go on all night, but joy comes with the morning."* Yes, joy comes in the morning! Our task as believers is to do all we can to make sure that we welcome it into our hearts and minds before we start the day.

Many of us confuse joy with the feeling of happiness, but there is a major difference between the two. The biggest difference is the fact that the emotion of happiness is conditional. It's a wonderful emotion, one that all of us strive to achieve, but happiness is also an emotion that is based on external circumstances. If we deem that conditions are good or if something good happens to us we feel happy; if something not-so-good happens we feel sad. We feel happy or sad based on what is going on in our lives externally. The spirit of joy, on the other hand, is an inside job. It is not based upon our external environment or circumstances. Joy comes with all the other extraordinary gifts we received through Christ with our new birth reality. Joyfulness is more than an emotion, it is the truth of who we are as sons and daughters of the Most High!

Romans 14:17 KJV says *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."* This verse is so extraordinary and simple that most of us miss the dynamic essence of what it is saying. We're talking about the Kingdom here! Sometimes we as Christians put a lot of energy on making trivial things the central focus of our salvation, but the Kingdom of God is so much bigger and better than that. Some say it is about what we eat or don't eat. Others say it is about what we drink or don't drink. The Apostle Paul reminds us how awesome the Kingdom of God truly is. It isn't about what we eat or drink. It's about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!

These simple, yet powerful words—righteousness, peace, and joy—are our reality as Christians. We have these qualities not because of anything special that we've done on our own; they are our birthright privileges. We can walk in the joy of the spirit day by day because God said that it's available for us to do so.

Much can be learned about our privileges as saints of God from the Children of Israel in Old Testament times. One of the more important lessons they've taught us can be witnessed in the promise of God to them in Joshua 1:9 KJV. It says, *"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest."*

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Every time I read this I get goose bumps. There is nothing in the world that compares to the assurance of knowing that God is with us wherever we go. That oughta make the hair on the back of your neck stand straight up. Because you see, God didn't tell the Children of Israel that He would come into their minds and make them *be not afraid*. He didn't say *"I'll make you strong and I'll make you have courage."* No, this isn't what Heavenly Father said. He told them *"BE STRONG! Do you guys hear what I'm saying. I, your God, am telling you to BE STRONG AND HAVE COURAGE! This isn't a game you're playing, kids. This is spiritual warfare. You've got to get ready to go in and take possession of what I've given you. Yes, I've already given it to you! Yes, it's yours! But in order for you to OWN what I've provided you've got to do something. You can't just stand around twiddling your thumbs; that won't get you anywhere. You've got to have a winner's mindset. None of that "maybe", "if", or "but" will do. It's 'Get outta my way, Satan, I'm moving out on the Word of God!' That's the kind of attitude of action I want to see from you!"*

God is telling us to keep our minds tight. We are to keep pumping them with the Word throughout our days, so that when we get up in the morning our first thought is *"Good Morning Father, what can I do for You today? How can I be a blessing?"* You have to know in your heart that you've been called for something special and that God wants to see you succeed in that calling far more than you want it for yourself. He wants you strong and built-up in Him.

If you wake up in the morning and gauge your circumstances by your own strength, then you may have a reason to feel down. Standing alone, you don't have what it takes to keep your tank full of righteousness, peace, and joy. But boy oh boy, in Christ, you have access to the infinite overflow! When you dial your thoughts to heaven and set your heart on Jesus, doubt becomes a thing of the past.

You and I have the privilege and responsibility of embracing the joy that God has provided through Christ. Yes, it is your choice, just as being strong and having courage was a choice for the Children of Israel. They could have remained in the desert, cowering away, full of fear and angst. They could have ignored the promise and never taken possession of God's provision, but thank the Father they didn't do that. They stepped out on what they knew was already theirs and that is exactly what you and I must do. When we rise each morning we ought to step out of bed with thoughts of joy, knowing that the day before us is one of victory!

God encouraged the Children of Israel with His wonderful promise to always be by their side. Whatever it is that you are dealing with today, you need to know that you are not going through it alone. Heavenly Father is with you, and the power of Jesus Christ is inside you. Don't focus your mind on the loss you may have experienced, or the problems you may be facing. Have confidence in the joy of the Lord and let it saturate your entire being. You won't be disappointed; God won't let you down. As you embrace the spirit of joy, the spirit of joy will embrace you and lift you higher and higher if you'll let it.

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