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7 Days

to

Increase

your

Joy

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7 Ways to Increase Your Joy

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Excerpts taken from *Experiencing Joy: Strategies for Living a Joy Filled Life*

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This Thing Called Joy

There is a BIG difference between happiness and joy, and most people do not experience joy because they have the wrong perspective. Having joy doesn't mean you are problem free and cheerful all the time. You don't have to be bubbling over with gladness to experience joy.

The dictionary defines *joy* as “gladness, exhilaration of spirits.”¹ The Bible refers to *joy* as “delight,” and defines joy as “to boast, glory, exult.” Another form of the word joy found in Scripture is *rejoice*, and even tells us, in one way or another, to “consider it all joy when we face trials and troubles.”²

Jesus said in John 14:27, “I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” And “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”³ As we exult in the Lord, giving Him praise and thanksgiving, boasting in His activity in our lives, our joy will be made complete in Him and through Him. As a result, we experience a joy that brings us strength and a peace of mind that will trump any circumstance in life⁴

True *biblical joy* is not fleeting, because true joy is not a feeling. You don't have to *feel* happy to have joy. It is even possible to have joy when life is unpleasant, even unfair. Joy doesn't come because everything in life is perfect. Joy doesn't come because we have possessions, money, or relationships, because joy is not found in things, people, or in the pleasures of this world. Genuine joy is a condition of the heart, a frame of mind that will lift up your spirits even when everything around you is falling apart.

Our joy needs to be rooted in God, and not what we see in front of us. Our greatest joy comes when we are enjoying Jesus; when we are focused on Him and His personal love for us. Joy comes when we take our eyes off our problems and make Jesus the center of our lives. Those are the days we walk with the awareness that no matter what happens in life, good or bad, He is our support and constant source of peace and joy.



¹ Webster's Encyclopedia of Dictionaries: New American Edition (Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc: 1978) edited by John Gage Allee, Phd. 205.

² See James 1:2

³ John 15:11

⁴ See Philippians 4:4-7

#1: Get to The Root of Your Pain



How you feel today often has something to do with your past. All of the woundedness you carry within your soul originated somewhere. Maybe it is something that happened years ago, or perhaps it is something that happened only yesterday; but, no matter where the issue originated, you've got to start doing some soul searching. If you are going to break the cycle of emotional bondage and have joy, it is vital that you allow God to get the root of your pain.

Getting to the core of the pain means reaching a whole new level of hardness. The process will be agonizing at times because those hurts are tender. Nonetheless, choose to move forward. Emotional issues are not resolved in a day.

Many people hide, denying or refusing to face the problem(s) because of fear, guilt, and shame. Believers especially hide, going to church every Sunday pretending everything is fine, only to return home to their emotional prisons of torment. I hid for years, looking like I had it all together, when inwardly I was dying.

It can be hard to admit how we feel, but healing begins when we can take off the mask and admit there is a problem. In order for God to get to the roots we carry inside of us, we've got to stop hiding and get real with ourselves. Emotions, like depression, are a sign that something else is wrong, and ignoring the problem(s), "the root," or hoping you'll get better, will not make you better.

If you want to move forward toward enjoying a healthy soul, you will need to confront some painful issues from your past. You'll need to stop making excuses, stop blaming others, and start taking responsibility for your pain. You can't do anything about what happened to you in the past, the past is the past, but you have to come to a place where you make the decision to let go of your past and hand over your pain and emotions to God.

Even though it may be painful and something you may feel you are not ready to face, take the first step toward healing. Admit there is a problem and then pray and ask God: "*Why am I feeling this way?*" Consider all the possibilities: Have you experienced a loss in your life? Have you been deeply disappointed? Are you discouraged? Do you compare yourself with others? Do you feel a lot of shame or guilt because of a past mistake? Were you hurt by other people? Are you deep in debt? Is there something that has you deeply worried?

Once God reveals the root and you see its origin, write it down:

The root of my pain is...

#2: Get Real with God

Part of the overall process of allowing God to get to the root of your pain is confessing your pain to Him. In order to experience emotional freedom, you will also need to allow yourself to get real with God. Be honest and completely open. Hold nothing back. In humility confess everything—the good, the bad and the ugly—let every mistake you’ve made, every raw deal you’ve suffered, every painful conviction you’ve held on to, let it all come spilling out.

God will not force us to get real with Him about our pain, but He does invite us to give Him our burdens.

First Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” To cast means to “throw off with force, to eject.” To cast does not mean to toss gently or to lay the burden down. If you only lay your burdens down it’s too easy to pick them back up again. You want those burdens to be as far away from you as possible. God wants you to throw your burdens upon Him, because only Jesus can carry your burdens far away from you.

It’s okay to seek professional help in this process. Some wounds are so deep that it may be necessary to seek professional counseling. But hear what I am telling you: Above anything else, you need God. Only God can change you. Only God can produce the inward change and bring healing and wholeness. If there is no internal transformation your freedom will not last. You may be able to control your feelings and behavior for a while, but unless you allow God to set you free, the emotional turmoil will keep coming back.

Go ahead, take everything you are suffering right now, or have suffered in your past, to God. No matter what it is. It’s time to deal with the pain. It’s time for change. It’s time to let go of the burden that has held you captive. It’s time to experience joy!





#3:

Proclaim God's Word

The tongue is a powerful instrument. It can speak death and it can speak life. James 3:6 says that the tongue “corrupts the whole person, and sets the course of his life.”

God works when we speak with hope. The enemy goes to work when we speak with hopelessness. By the way we think and talk, we either put God in charge or we hand over custody to the devil. When God is in charge of our lives He brings life, power, satisfaction and joy. When we hand over control to the enemy he brings depression, fear, doubt and disappointment.

We have a choice. We can be a prisoner to our pain, or a prisoner of hope. In order to stop being a prisoner to pain, we must start proclaiming the power and life of God's word over the way we feel. To break free, we need to pick up our Bible and verbally pronounce God's word over our pain. This takes the focus off us and our emotions, and puts it on Jesus and His power. And when we proclaim God's truth over the way we feel, we become consumed with faith and hope, which fills us with joy.

Beloved, do you want more joy? Then stop the negative thinking and speaking. Pick up your Bible, allow God's word to renew your mind, open your mouth, proclaim His truth in faith—and tell that mountain to MOVE!

With your focus on Jesus, you can overtake that mountain with the power of God's word. You can move forward and recover from the pain of your past and every mistake you've made. It will take time and a serious investment on your part to be in the word of God every day, but that investment will yield a very high dividend.

It is possible to win the battle over our emotions and have joy, but we need to make the choice to renew our thoughts with God's word, and then let the power of those renewed thoughts come out of our mouths like tongues of fire against the enemy's schemes.

#4: Forgive

When someone has wronged us, hurt us deeply, even hurt someone we love, it is hard to forgive. Sometimes we even want to take matters into our own hands and try to bring about vindication. We want the person who hurt us, or hurt our loved one, to suffer. Somehow, to us, this course of action justifies our suffering. But the truth of the matter is, being unforgiving and vengeful only increases the pain.

Finding forgiveness begins with the decision to forgive. Forgiveness doesn't make what someone did to you okay. Forgiveness makes you okay. Unforgiveness fills you with a deadly poison that is only killing you.

We not only need to forgive those who hurt us, but we also need to forgive ourselves for our past mistakes. Guilt, shame, even self-hatred can weigh on us heavily when we are unable to forgive ourselves. Even when we've asked God to forgive us, we can still hold onto the error.

If there are things that are haunting your soul, make the choice to let them go and receive God's forgiveness. If you have asked God to forgive you, then know in your heart that He has forgiven you. Don't feel guilt or shame over something God has already pardoned. Guilt and shame is a lie from the enemy, and is often our way of trying to compensate for something that Jesus already died to give us. Don't convince yourself that God will not forgive you, because the mistake you made is too great. No matter what you did, no matter how long ago it happened, if you ask for forgiveness—you are forgiven—receive it.

Whenever we refuse to forgive ourselves or someone else, we assign ourselves a prison sentence, and we will not get out of that prison until we decide to forgive. Don't waste another minute being angry over something that happened to you that you cannot fix or change. Forgive, let go of what has been holding you captive (the hurt, the betrayal, the disappointment, the mistakes). If someone has hurt you, God will vindicate. If you've made mistakes, His mercy is fresh and new every day.

Forgiveness does take humility, maybe that's why we find it so hard to do. But, for our own sake, let's swallow that hard pill. It's time to stop carrying those past hurts and mistakes around like an old ball and chain. Pray and ask for God's help, and when Jesus opens that prison door and removes those shackles, walk on and don't look back. You don't have to suffer one more day—forgive and find joy.



#5: Put on a Garment of Praise and Worship

When we feel down and discouraged our souls become heavy with sadness. This pulls us away from the joy that is ours in Christ. But Jesus was sent to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners; to give them the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.⁵

When we feel low, praising God may be the last thing we *feel* like doing. The enemy does not want us to praise God, he knows the power that comes through our praises; he also knows that in our human nature, we tend to do what is comfortable and pleasing to us, so he uses our *feelings* against us. But our victory over the spirit of despair comes when our eyes are focused on Jesus and our hearts are flooded with worship.



If you want more joy in your life, learn to pursue a lifestyle of worship. Begin your day with praise to God. As you get dressed, ask Him to clothe you with that garment of praise. While you have breakfast, feed your soul with the praises of God's word. While you drive in your car put on worship music. As you go through your day, think on what is true, admirable and praiseworthy,⁶ then end your day with thanksgiving and praise for all of the good things God has done in your life.

Again, you may not *feel* like praising and worshipping God, especially when you are emotional and discouraged, and everything in life seems to be going wrong, but push past how you feel and try it. Muster up all you have to give, even if it's a broken offering and only a little bit, lift that praise up to God. As you begin to worship, the Holy Spirit will help you and increase your ability to love God through the pain. Through the power of the Holy Spirit you can find the strength to endure, even when you think you can't go on. In the midst of the offering, the Spirit will take your shattered heart and bring it to life with hope and joy.

Praise and worship change everything, because an exchange is taking place. Through praise and worship God is exchanging your heavy heart and soul and making them light. And remember, the enemy cannot stand our worship. He flees when you begin to praise and worship God. Therefore, submit to God; come near to Him in worship and He will come near to you. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.⁷

⁵ See Isaiah 61:1-3

⁶ See Philippians 4:8

⁷ See James 4:7-8

#6: Go Out and Help Someone

It's amazing how our problems shrink when we reach out and help other people. Too often we're miserable because we're far too focused on ourselves and what we are going through. Sometimes all it takes to beat the blues and experience joy is a sense of purpose.



“So when he finished washing their feet and had put on His garments and had sat down again, He said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done for you? If I then, your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you this as an example, so that you should do what I have done to you. If you know these things, *blessed and happy* and to be envied are you if you practice them’”⁸

Basically Jesus was saying, “If you go out and serve others, if you do to others what I have done to you, you will be blessed and happy.” Do you see that? If you exercise the gift of giving and doing for others for no other reason than to reveal Jesus, you will be blessed and happy—and it will show through in pure joy! Maybe that’s why Jesus also said ‘you are to be envied if you practice helping others.’ People will see your joy through serving others, and they will want that joy for themselves.

Do not feel guilty if you have not made serving others a practice in the past. Today is a new day. Go forward in the renewed hope that you can have joy in this life by helping others, the kind of joy that will affect those around you.

Serve with the comfort God has given you.⁹ Something happens in our emotional make-up when we stop long enough to take the focus off ourselves and tell

others about the work God has done in our lives. For example, I believe one of the reasons why depression does not come back into my life is because I am continually sharing my story to help others overcome. When we proclaim the works of God in our lives, we are reminded of God’s goodness. When we share our story to offer others hope, we focus on what God has done instead of the mistakes we’ve made. When we look back and see the beauty He has made out of our ashes, we find joy!

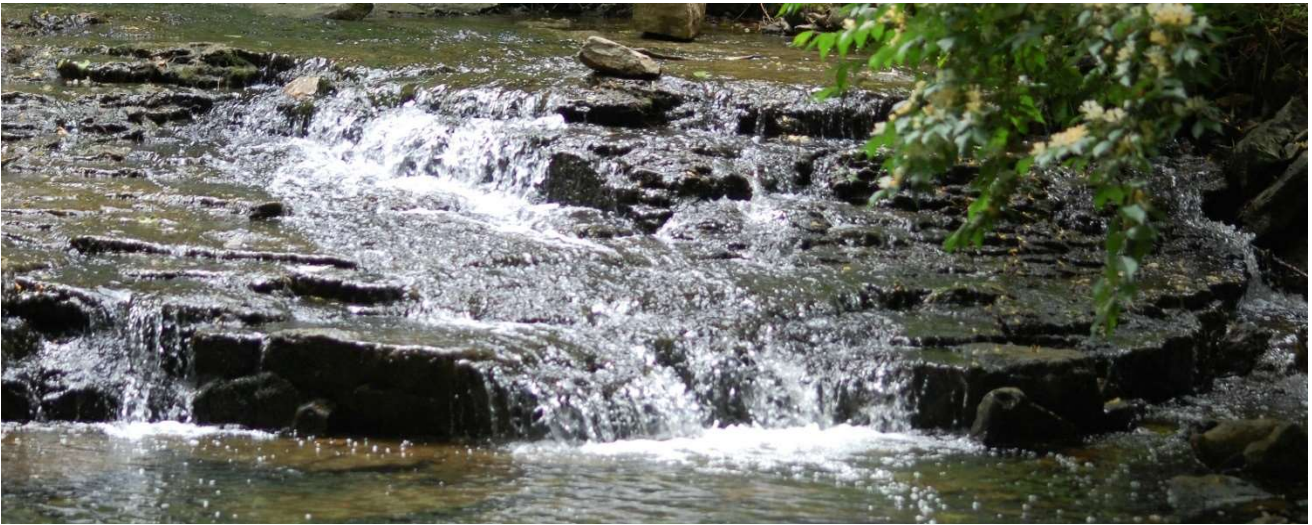
⁸ See John 13:12, 14, 17 AMP

⁹ 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

#7: Know The Giver of All Joy

Genuine joy is found in an intimate, working relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Getting real with Him, submitting to Him, proclaiming the promises found in His word, forgiving others as He forgave you, worshipping and praising Him for everything in your life, and then going out and sharing Him with others. Experiencing joy is to know Jesus!

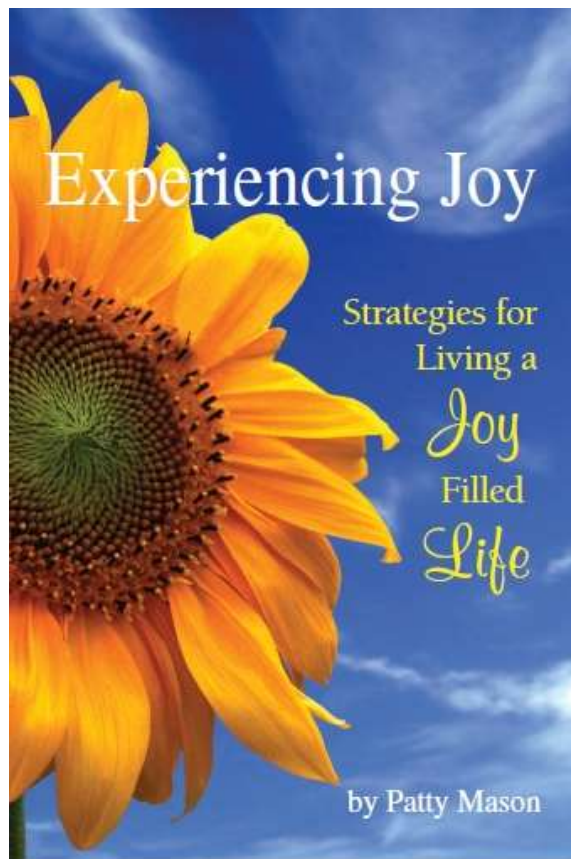
I know it's hard to take action when you are feeling down or anxious, but invest in your healing. You can invest in your healing and find joy, or you can invest in your misery. The only thing that will set you free is to *allow Jesus to invade your life*. You will not have hope, healing or joy until you put Jesus at the center of your life. You cannot visit Jesus on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings and see lasting change. Jesus doesn't call us to come and visit Him, He calls us to come and surrender our whole heart, soul, mind and strength.



If you want joy, then bring everything to God. Get real with Him and ask Him to get to the root of your pain. Get in the word and proclaim His truth out loud. Meditate on those promises. Allow God's word to replace lies with truth. Forgive yourself. Stop blaming those who have hurt you. Stand up and take responsibility for your pain and walk on. Learn to live a lifestyle of worship and praise that is completely, without reservation, totally and utterly committed to Christ. Then go out and comfort others with the comfort He has given you.

The key to experiencing joy is Jesus. Embrace Jesus with everything you've got! Enjoy Him, and the abundant life He died to give you. Stop making someone else responsible for your healing and hope. No one can bring you joy the way Jesus can. No one can heal you—only Jesus can. No one has the power to pull you from the miry clay and set your feet on sound ground—only Jesus can. Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life. He is the Answer you've been looking for. Jesus is your joy, because the only pure joy is in Jesus.

Want to Go Deeper



7 Ways to Increase your Joy is excerpts taken from *Experiencing Joy: Strategies for Living a Joy Filled Life*. God wants you to experience joy and to enjoy your life. You were designed to know and share in the joy of your Master. God fills your heart with a joy that goes beyond earthly circumstances. He wants to remove your misery and cloth you with joy.

Want to go deeper and experience profound, lasting joy?

Experiencing Joy is for those who are missing out on joyful living and want to learn how to break the cycle of emotional pain and come face-to-face with lasting joy. God gives us everything we need to live a victorious life. It's time to break the cycle of depression, and every other deadly emotion that has us feeling trapped, and live a life filled with Joy!

“Powerful and personal life-changing revelation.”

“Experiencing Joy gives us hope!

Mason digs deep in her own soul so readers can identify their roots of emotional pain, then she instills a willingness to allow God’s promises to uproot and replace them. Mason’s book is relatable, easy to read and definitely one that I highly recommend.”

—**Jamee Rae Pineda, co-director of The Solid Rock Road**

“Powerful Message of Hope for Everyone!”

“Experiencing Joy is not just a book for those going through depression; it is a book that can also help people stop depression and other harmful emotions before they set it.”

—**Sandy Keller**

To order, visit www.LibertyinChristMinistries.com, or ask for it wherever books are sold.

Learn More About the Author



Patty Mason is a wife, mother, and grandmother who found hope and healing when Jesus reached into her well of depression and set her free. From her painful past, battle with depression, anger, and insecurities, God created Liberty in Christ Ministries. For more than two decades, Patty has shared her story of God's redeeming in several books, blogs, and magazines, including Lifeway's "Living More," as well as on numerous radio and television program including Moody Radio and The 700 Club. Her books also include, *Know That I AM God*, *Finally Free: Breaking the Bonds of Depression without God*, and *The Power of Hope*.

For more information about Patty, her books or ministry, visit www.LibertyinChristMinistries.com

Inspiring Women, Changing Lives

Patty's genuine transparency and passion for Jesus has empowered and inspired women of all ages to find hope, healing, and freedom for their souls.

To learn more or to check her availability, visit www.LibertyinChristMinistries.com

You can also email Patty directly at patty@LibertyinChristMinistries.com





At LICM, it is our passion to help others discover, embrace, and live out their God given freedom, by showing them how to identify and overcome the hindrances that keep them from knowing Christ and His personal love.

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