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JOY

1. Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit

+ All the fruits of the Spirit are freely given according to the grace of the Lord . The only requirement from the believer is to obey the commandments of the Lord in the bible. The obedience is the characteristic of the new person whom we got through Baptism.

+ The fruits of the Spirit are called virtues as they appear as moral excellence in the life of the believers.

+ The obedience to the commandments needs a lot of spiritual struggle which is through the grace and the human diligence

+ Remember the following verses:

+ *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*[Gal.5:22-23]

+ *“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith **virtue**, to **virtue knowledge**”,* [2 Pet 1:5]

+ *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim **the praises** of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;[1 Pet.2:9]*

the praises: the Greek word means virtues =moral excellence

2. Differentiation between true joy and false joy

+ **False joy:** it is happiness. Happiness to me is a momentary feeling. I felt happy when I had a good day or a good time with my family. This feeling is related to the surrounding situations like success .

+ **True Joy :** Joy is much more deep and abiding. You can have joy even in the darkest moments. I would say it is similar to peace. One commentary I read said, “Joy in the Christian life is in direct proportion as believers walk with the Lord.” It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit who is abiding within us.

Christian Joy is not

1. it is not an act of will-power, but a spontaneous, emotional response of the heart.
2. it is not superficial and flimsy, but deep and firm.
3. it is not natural, but spiritual.

3. Joy is mandatory for the spiritual progress

+ The Lord – through His crucifixion and resurrection- grants us the new life which is full of glory and joy . He promised us : “.....; *but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.*” (John 16:22). His joy is permanent in the hearts of the believers and a sign of the presence of the Lord in the heart.

+ St. Paul emphasises this facts when he wrote : “rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4)

4. Reasons for rejoicing

+ We accepted the salvation of Christ [refer to the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch – (Acts 8:35-38)]

+ Our sins are forgiven in His sacrifice on the cross as we repent and confess (Ps 32:1-2) & (1 John 1:9 , 2:1-2)

+ Our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20)

+ Authority over all the evil spirits (Luke 10:17-19)

+ Spread the word of God among nonbelievers (Acts 11: 20-23 , 15:3 ; Phil. 1:18)

+ The others who are saved through our service (1 Thess. 2:19-20 , 3John 4)

+ The Christian fellowship and unity among the brethren (Phil.2:1-2 ; 4:10 ; Phil.7)

+ The Lord is at hand (Phil. 4:5)

5. The value of Joy in the spiritual path

+ All the joy we live in here is a glimpse of that in heaven. How will be the joy there? (1 John 3:2)

+ Counteract the sufferings and the crosses we carry for the sake of the Lord (John 16:22 ; Acts 5:41 ; 16:23-25)