

HOW TO LIVE CHRISTIAN JOY

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Everyone wants to find more meaning, joy, and peace in their lives. Here are seven steps that can help us...



1. REMEMBER 'J-O-Y.'

First of all, there is an acronym for JOY- JESUS, OTHERS, YOURSELF. In other words, put Jesus and others before yourself, and put in this order we can and will be happy.

2. SURRENDER

We can surrender the Lord in our life, and especially to the power of the Holy Spirit: *"For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self control"* (Galatians 5:22-23).

We can also surrender all of our problems to Him. Someone once told me, 'God has big shoulders.' In other words, He can handle all of our problems and anxieties. If you find yourself worrying needlessly, you can ask yourself: can I do anything about this situation, now? If you cannot change it, the worry is useless. The Serenity prayer can be helpful for this: *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."* Jesus encourages us:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Mt 6:25-26, 28, 31-32).

3. STAY CONNECTED TO CHRIST AND BE SECURE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

To stay connected to Christ seems obvious, yet it is vital for our spiritual journey. The Lord tells us, "I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in Him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me, you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). How true this is. We cannot bear fruit unless we remain in Jesus Christ and in His Word. He gave Himself to redeem us.

"I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). "God is love," (1 Jn 4:8), the Scriptures assure us, and we should ask the good Lord for the grace to be secure in this love. God tells us, "I fostered them as one who raises an infant to its cheeks...can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you" (Hosea 11:1; Isaiah 49:15).

What can help us remain connected to Christ's love?

**Through the Word of God*

We can read, reflect and meditate on God's Living Word, allowing it to penetrate into the deepest recesses of our hearts and souls. To allow God's Word to shape our lives. It is helpful to use a Bible concordance, and whatever situation you might encounter in life you can look it up and see what God's Word has to say about it. (For example, what the Bible tells us about worry, fear, anxiety...or whatever trial you might experience). What a blessing and gift the Word of God is for us! His Word is what empowers us.

Remember that Jesus fought temptations through the Word of God (Mt 4). *"The Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, and able to discern thoughts and reflections of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). As Scripture also says, *"For our struggle is not with*

flesh and blood, but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness" (Ephesians 6:12-13). We can fight this darkness with light: the light and power that is in God's Word.

**Through the Sacraments*

We stay connected to Christ through the seven Sacraments by Jesus to His Church: *Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders*. For example, it is so important to go to Mass on Sunday's, in order to "keep holy the Sabbath day" as a day of worship, but also to stay connected to Christ in the Eucharist. Although not an obligation, we also have the opportunity to attend daily Mass if we are able. What a gift!

**Through Prayer*

It is helpful to make time in the day to pray. Perhaps you have a few minutes you can set aside either in the mornings or in the evening to do so. In this way, you can pray and intercede for others, for the needs of your family, your friends, and even the entire world.

We can spend time *praising* the Lord. "Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). Spend quality time with Jesus especially in Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Many churches offer perpetual adoration - spending whatever time we can, whether it is an hour, or just 15, 30, or 45 minutes in prayer before Our Eucharistic Lord. He is the Divine Physician who brings us great joy and peace to our souls, minds, and hearts.

**Uniting our Wills to God's*

This brings a great source of peace in the depths of our souls. We can pray just as Jesus did during his agony in the garden: "Father, if you are willing, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42). Doing the Will of God is what sustains us, just as food would nourish us: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me," (Jn 4:34) Jesus says in the Gospels. Since God only desires what is best for us and what will be for our good, obeying God's commandments will make us happy.

Use the Sacramental's of the Church

These are our spiritual weapons. For example,

Holy Water: Bless yourself, your room, etc. Holy Water is powerful in the spiritual battle.

Holy Rosary: Our Lady told Blessed Alan the Rosary is the weapon. The Rosary was one of Blessed John Paul II's favorite prayers. You are praying and meditating on the life of Christ.

Scapular: Wear the Scapular of Our Lady with love and devotion.

4. CULTIVATE A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE AND TRUST

Gratitude

An old saying goes, 'a grateful heart cannot be a hateful heart.' In the Gospel story of the healing of the ten lepers, it reads: "*And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"*" (Luke 17:15-18).

It seems that He asks this question with sadness for the lack of gratitude on the part of those who had received healing and grace. Gratitude is also a good remedy for those who struggle with envy. Count your blessings - literally keep track of them. The word of the Lord advises us, "be thankful" (Colossians 3:15).

Trust

We must trust God. For example, God allowed many sufferings in the book of Job. Despite his sufferings, Job remained faithful, and never cursed God. After His trials, God blessed Him

abundantly. He continued to trust Him in hard times: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15).

5. LIVE A LIFE OF SIMPLICITY

What helps us to live a life of simplicity is through following the Beatitudes. The word, 'blessed' is simply another word for happy. The eight Beatitudes of Jesus (Mt 5:1-12) help us to live out our call to love, God and others.

6. WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE

We forgive because we have experienced God's forgiveness of us. We will find a great freedom in forgiveness. We must look past resentments, although it may be hard to do. Peter asked Jesus, "'How often must I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus replied, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven'" (Matthew 18). This is how important it is to forgive: without measure.

7. HAVE A HEART OF SERVICE

True love is proven, tried and strengthened by the readiness and capability to sacrifice. God's love is rooted in sacrifice. He challenges us to love others as He has loved us. In the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25, the Lord tells us He will separate the sheep from the goats, one at his right, the other on his left, according to how they treated others. Jesus tells the righteous: "*inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....for whatever you did to the least of your brothers you did it to me*" (Mt 25:34,40).

Serving draws you out of yourself. For example, find some place where you could use your gifts and talents to volunteer and help others, bringing the light of Christ. In doing so you will often look around and discover there are plenty of people in need of care, and are in situations that are much worse than ours. This takes a tendency focus off of ourselves and look to others. This brings also deeper purpose to our lives, and meaning.

These are just a few ways for cultivating more meaning, peace, and joy in life that I pray you find helpful. Below you will also find selected Scripture passages on joy. God bless you! *May we have the deep joy of our faith in His Word and His promises, living in trust that "Nothing is impossible with God"* -Lk 1:37.

Scriptures on Joy:

Nehemiah 8:10

This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the **joy** of the LORD is your strength.

Psalms 20:5

May we shout for **joy** over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests.

Psalms 30:11

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

Psalms 47:5

God has ascended amid shouts of **joy**, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

Isaiah 35:2

{the desert} will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for **joy** . . . they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Isaiah 35:10

and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting **joy** will crown their heads. Gladness and **joy** will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

[Luke 10:21](#)

"At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."

[Luke 15:5](#)

And when he finds it (the lost sheep), he joyfully puts it on his shoulders.

[John 15:11](#)

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

[John 16:19-21](#)

Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me. Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world."

[John 16:24](#)

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

[Acts 2:28](#)

You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

[Acts 13:52](#)

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

[Galatians 5:22](#)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self control.

[1 Thessalonians 2:19-20](#)

For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

[Philippians 4:1](#)

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

[Philippians 4:4](#)

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I say, rejoice!

[Colossians 1:12](#)

...and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

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