



PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES ARE A PART OF LIFE, AND IT CAN BE HARD TO BE JOYFUL WHEN YOU ARE FACED WITH ADVERSITY. THE JOY YOU FIND IN JESUS IS BASED ON MORE THAN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUND YOU. IF YOUR JOY IS BASED PURELY ON THE THINGS THAT BRING YOU GRATIFICATION, THEN YOUR JOY IS NOT GROUNDED IN WHAT IS EVERLASTING—JESUS.



BILLY SUNDAY¹ ONCE SAID: "IF YOU HAVE NO JOY, THERE'S A LEAK IN YOUR CHRISTIANITY." A CHRISTIAN'S JOY COMES FROM GOD; IT COMES THROUGH THE ASSURANCE OF KNOWING THAT GOD WILL BE YOUR CONSTANT NO MATTER WHAT WINDS OF ADVERSITY BLOW YOUR WAY. WHEN YOUR FAITH IN GOD IS STRONG, WHEN YOU ARE TRUSTING IN HIS PROMISES TO YOU, THEN YOU CAN HAVE THE PEACE AND JOY THAT COME THROUGH KNOWING GOD IS IN CONTROL.

Hey, Paul! You don't have to sit here getting rained on. Come fly with Me and I'll take you above the clouds!



The rainstorms of life

JOY IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT;² IT IS THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE. THAT MEANS THAT DESPITE THE RAINSTORMS OF LIFE, THE ADVERSITY OR CHALLENGES YOU FACE, YOU CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT ABOVE THE CLOUDS THE SUN IS STILL SHINING.

GOD CAN LIFT YOU ABOVE THE GLOOM AND DOOM AND FILL YOUR HEART WITH JOY. BUT YOU HAVE TO TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD ACCEPTING THE JOY HE HAS TO OFFER. WHAT ARE THOSE STEPS?

1. BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES TO YOU. HE PROMISED THAT HIS JOY WILL BE YOUR STRENGTH,³ SO HOLD ON TO THAT.
2. TAKE TIME REGULARLY WITH GOD. KING DAVID ONCE SAID, "YOU WILL TEACH ME THE RIGHT WAY TO LIVE. JUST BEING WITH YOU WILL BRING COMPLETE HAPPINESS. BEING AT YOUR RIGHT SIDE WILL MAKE ME HAPPY FOREVER."⁴
3. RESIST NEGATIVE OR COMPARING THOUGHTS. IF YOU ALLOW NEGATIVITY TO CLOUD YOUR VISION, IT IS HARD TO SEE WHAT IS GOOD OR UPLIFTING. BY PUSHING AWAY NEGATIVE OR COMPARING THOUGHTS, YOU MAKE WAY FOR GOD'S JOY TO FILL YOUR HEART.
4. LOOK FOR THE GOOD. MAKE A POINT TO FIND THINGS THAT BRING YOU HAPPINESS, SATISFACTION, OR CONTENTMENT. THE MORE YOU LOOK FOR THE GOOD, THE MORE YOU WILL FIND IT.
5. LOOK FOR WAYS TO BRING JOY TO OTHERS. IN SO DOING, JOY WILL FIND YOU.

Bill sat within his tent of gloom, His woeful, mournful spiritual tomb. Bill thought that real joy could not be, It was for him a fantasy. (He should go see Johannes!)

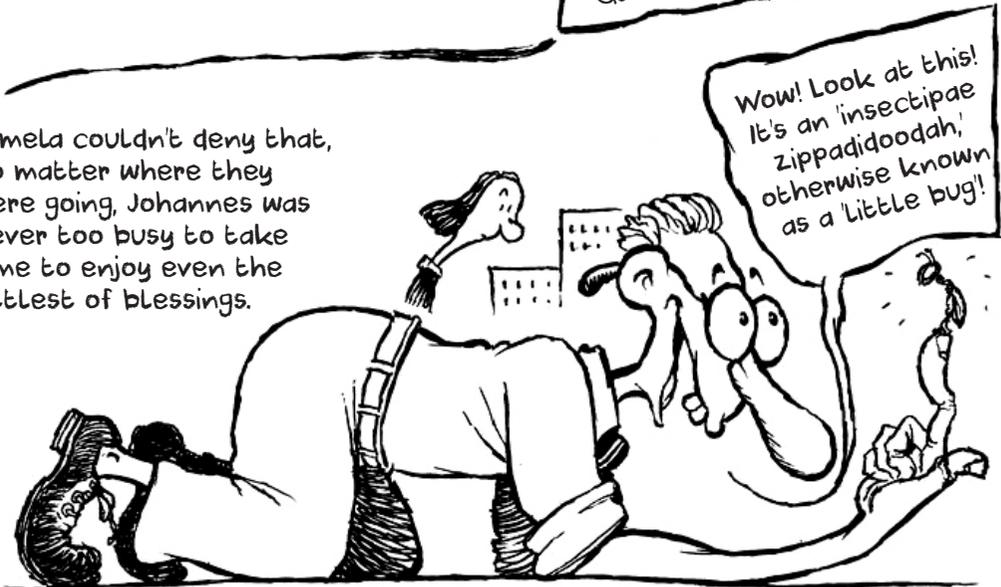


Challenging tennis match

Even though Scott is behind 0-6, 0-5, his body language yells, "I am having a great time!"



Pamela couldn't deny that, no matter where they were going, Johannes was never too busy to take time to enjoy even the littlest of blessings.



GOD'S TRUE JOY IS MORE REAL AND GENUINE THAN THE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS THAT ENTER YOUR MIND. IF YOU CHOOSE TO PUT ON AN ATTITUDE OF JOY, THEN IN TIME YOU WILL EXPERIENCE JOY. BUT IF YOU DECIDE TO DWELL IN THE DENS OF GLOOM, THEN JOY WILL SEEM FAR AWAY.

THE JOY YOU CAN FIND IN JESUS LOOKS BEYOND THE MOMENTARY TRIALS OR DIFFICULTIES AND FOCUSES ON GOD'S CONSTANCY AND LOVE FOR YOU, WHICH WILL NOT ONLY BRING YOU JOY BUT PEACE AS WELL. WHEN YOU HOLD TO THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU, THEN YOU CAN TRUST THAT HE IS IN CONTROL, HE WILL HELP TO WORK OUT THE ROUGH PATCHES, AND EVEN BRING YOU JOY THROUGH IT ALL.

JOY IS PRAYER. JOY IS STRENGTH. JOY IS LOVE. JOY IS A NET OF LOVE BY WHICH YOU CAN CATCH SOULS. GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER. SHE GIVES MOST WHO GIVES WITH JOY. THE BEST WAY TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE IS TO ACCEPT EVERYTHING WITH JOY. A JOYFUL HEART IS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF A HEART BURNING WITH LOVE. NEVER LET ANYTHING SO FILL YOU WITH SORROW AS TO MAKE YOU FORGET THE JOY OF THE CHRIST RISEN.—MOTHER TERESA

Footnotes:

¹ Billy Sunday (1862–1935) was an American professional baseball player who later became an influential evangelist.

² See Galatians 5:22.

³ See Nehemiah 8:10.

⁴ Psalm 16:11 ERV

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