

CHRISTIAN FINANCE SERIES

SPIRIT OF JOY

Deut. 28: 1-14 God tells the Israelites that He is going to bless them from. Then in verses 15-46 He enumerates the curses that would befall Israel if they do not obey the voice of the Lord, keep His commandments and His statutes. He tells them why the curse will happen and the causes of the curse. In verses 47-48 it says, *“Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.*

When God has blessed you plentifully, when you have eaten, you are full, you are sufficient, do not forget to serve the Lord your God with gladness and with joy. In other words God tells them that when they are already blessed, if they failed to rejoice in the Lord, they will lose everything they have. He continues that the same principle of joy will help us to keep our goods. Then the same principle of joy will apply to our receiving the goods. Then joy will help us to receive our goods.

One of the steps of faith that you exercise is that before you receive – rejoice. In Rom.4 Abraham gave glory to God even before he received. And one of the elements of faith is that we rejoice before we see. So joy is an important part when we look at the element of finances. When you don't have joy you lose everything. When you don't have joy you cannot receive from God, and when you are a giver,

God tells you be a cheerful one.

Apparently joy and finance are connected. The spirit of joy and the spirit of prosperity are one. The spirit of poverty and the spirit of sorrow are also one. The spirit of joy and the spirit of prosperity are connected. They function together and poverty brings us curse and sorrow.

Remember in Gen.3 that Adam and Eve have their dominion over the earth but when they fell they lost the privileges of the garden. And before death took place, before sickness took place, they just lost everything. Before poverty came into their life, the first thing they lost was joy. And God says to the man you will eat in sorrow. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat in sorrow. Sorrow came and poverty also came. When joy goes sorrow comes. When joy goes prosperity goes. When sorrow comes poverty comes.

When the Israelites received plentiful and they lose their spirit of joy, God is telling them in Deut.28:47 That when they lose the spirit of joy, they will lose their kingdom. They will lose everything they have. They will be naked. They will be thirsty. They will be hungry. Guard your heart against sorrow and make sure you rejoice in the Lord at all times.

Why is it so important for us to have joy all the time? We want to look at the principle of prosperity very closely. There is soul prosperity and there is physical prosperity. Since we are talking about the law of finances, we will connect to being blessed with worldly goods, being blessed with material blessing. Material blessings and worldly goods carry with them the tendency towards being anxious and full of care. In Lk. 8 This time we look at the parable of the Sower. And Jesus talks about those who fell among thorns in verse 14. *And the ones that fell among thrones are those who, when thy heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches and pleasures of life and being no fruit to maturity.* So if you are not careful with worldly prosperity and material prosperity, it will bring about its own form of care and anxiety that will choke the Word of God and render the Word of God ineffective in your life. There are a lot of people who are blessed materially but they spent their

life worrying over the material goods. They spend their useful time that God has given to them 24 hours a day worrying about their worldly goods and worldly possessions instead of upon spiritual things. And as a result of that the Word of God cannot prosper them. The Word of God cannot bear fruit in their life. These worldly goods become thorns to them.

Today we are going to talk about how you are going to prevent material blessing and prosperity from being a thorn to your life. They can be thorns to your life if you allow them to be. They can cause you to spend a lot of time worrying with anxiety and care. You can prevent it through the law and through the spirit of joy.

1 Tim.6: 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

See what happens here. Those who desire to be rich, those who think that the law of prosperity is the law to use selfishly, those who are greedy and selfish and covetous and have not gotten rid of all these things in their lives – when they try to apply the law of prosperity, they will pierce themselves with many sorrows. The cares and anxiety of life and worldly goods will overwhelm them. Think about the many rich people in the world today who are worried about what will happen in the world economy. Think about them worrying about thieves and crime and kidnappings. They are living in misery. So with worldly goods comes the opportunity to cause cares on your life. Notice again Paul uses the word *sorrow*. Sorrow is involved in the thorns of this life affecting the rich.

But there is a way you can overcome that - by the spirit of joy. When you have joy, you are at rest. When you are anxious, you are not at ease. It is not possible to have the spirit of joy on you and the spirit of sorrow at the same time. When you have the joy of the Lord in your life, you are at rest. You are not worried. When you lose your joy, you begin worrying. When you begin worrying, you begin to depend on your own strength. When you begin to depend on your own strength,

the devil comes and you are finished. We do not fight the devil with our own strength. But we wrestle and fight the devil with the Spirit and by the strength of our Lord. By ourselves we are no match for him. But with the Lord he is no match for us.

So the spirit of joy must come together with prosperity. We must learn to live in the spirit of joy. So the first reason why we see joy is important is because joy keeps the thorns away. The thorns for sorrow, the cares of this life, the anxieties of this life. Joy keeps these away. When you lose your joy you become anxious and full of all kinds of cares in this life. God says to the Israelites keep your joy and you will keep your goods. If the devil steals your joy, he will steal your goods. If the devil cannot steal your joy, he cannot steal your goods. Don't let the devil steal your joy from you. The devil stole joy from Adam and Eve. Then he stole their health and their prosperity. Guard your joy and learn to rejoice in God at all times. The joy of the Lord is your strength. If you lose your joy, you lose your health. Prov.17:22 *A merry heart do good like a medicine.* In other words a merry heart is equal to a medicine. I would rather take a merry heart than to take all those pills. Joy is my medicine.

I have an article from Encyclopedia Britannica on how joy and laughter produce health. It talks about how when a person rejoices their bodies begin producing all those hormone and substances from the glands in your bodies. And your bodies are able to overcome germs where earlier they could not overcome. There is something physical happening when a person rejoices in God. It has been scientifically documented that truly a merry heart do good like a medicine. That is on the health area. If the devil cannot steal your joy, he cannot steal your health. So rejoice in your home and have full of laughter. We have the spiritual ability to laugh and to rejoice in God. Not laughing because somebody cracks a joke. But laughing because your spirit is a spirit of joy.

Gal.5:22-23 love, joy. Your spirit is a spirit of joy. The only thing is we have to learn to release it out. Joy keeps you at rest. The bible says in the presence of the Lord there is fullness of joy. If you say you are in the presence of the Lord and you don't have joy, I don't know whose presence you are in. In Heb.4 *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God, for he who has entered his rest as himself also ceased*

from his work as God did from his. In Eph.2 the bible tells us that we are made to be his workmanship to show forth his work in us. Eph.2: 10 *For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works.* The good works are not your own work. It is his work through you. Look at chapter 3 verse 20. *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.* So its God working through you, as long as you are born again whether you are in the ministry or you are in the secular world, God has to work through you. But before God can work through us we have to stop our own work. We have to learn to stop in our own plans and our own desires. We have to rest in God. He who has entered into God's rest has ceased from his own work.

How do you enter into that realm? Joy is your rest button. When you rejoice in the Lord, you are at rest. Have you seen sometimes in the home and in the family where a discipline has taken place. Everybody is just serious and quiet. But when somebody just laugh out loud, everybody just rest again. When there is no joy there is no relaxation, there is no rest. Joy is your rest button.

Apparently rejoicing is a button you press, not God. The bible tells us in Philippians the whole book tells you rejoice in the Lord. The will to rejoice rests with us. Paul says rejoice in the Lord. Don't forget Phil.4: 19 was the climax of the joy book. The whole book tells you rejoice in the Lord. The will to rejoice rests with us. Paul says rejoice in the Lord. Some people's rejoicings have broken down. They need to be sent back to the spiritual workshop to have their rejoicings tuned back again.

Look at the word rejoice. It means that there are certain circumstances that are still part of your joy. Now you have to re-joy, re-fill yourself with joy. Let your spirit arise because there is joy in your spirit. So the second reason why we must rejoice is because joy put us into a rest. And when you are rest, you have ceased from your own work, and God does His work through you. All you have to do is just worship God and say, "I love you Lord, I praise you" and then the joy will come forth. I laugh and rejoice because I decide to. I don't rejoice because of circumstances. That is not the joy of the Lord. That is the happiness that comes from circumstances. But I rejoice because I am in God's presence. In his presence

there is joy.

Look at the apostle Paul in Philippians. Do you know where he is when he told the people to rejoice? He was in prison. And he said his head is at stake. There is a possibility of him being sentenced to death. But he knew his ministry was not up so he would not die. He said to be with God is better but nonetheless he must stay for the ministry. He said though I am bounded but the gospel is free. And he says rejoice in the Lord. He did not say rejoice in your circumstances. He did not say rejoice in your strength. But rejoice in the Lord because in the Lord there is fullness of joy. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Sometimes people try to put forth a type of spiritual Christianity. But there is too much tension involved. There is no liberty. Even in Katherine Khulman's meetings you will find that even though there is seriousness in giving reverence and awe to God, yet in her meetings people laugh. See where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But sometimes when man-made tradition comes in we want a man-made reverence. And we tell people when you step into the church your face must be serious. We have a form of religion. But the Spirit of the Lord is not there. For where the Spirit is there is liberty. In the presence of the Lord there is fullness of joy. Joy brings you at rest. Learn to turn the joy button on. I laugh in faith. You don't laugh because of circumstances. Remember you pray in tongues. You pray in faith. You don't understand what you pray. But by faith you just pray forth. When I laugh in the Spirit I laugh in faith. Sometimes fear tries to come in but I will stand up and laugh, "Devil you are defeated." The devil doesn't like to hear us laugh. He says, "I don't understand those people. I try to put fear in their life. They laugh at me." We are behaving like God. When God looks down from His throne at His enemies, God laughs because He knows they are defeated.

The third reason for joy is because joy is your expression of your faith in God. If you believe you receive your rejoicings. When you are talking about prosperity where you are believing God for things in your life - if you really believe you will start rejoicing. Some people will only rejoice when they see the manifestation. But that is not faith. Faith is believing before you see. If you see and believe, you don't have faith. In everything I prayed for I do all the rejoicing. When the thing comes I am just cool and calm.

In Rom.4:20 *He did not waiver at the promise of God through unbelief but was strengthened in faith giving glory to God.* Mk.11: 23-24 It says, *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask them when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.”* There is a *believe you receive* and there is *you shall have them*. Between the point of believe and you receive there is a gap. This gap is where you are standing in faith until you shall have them come to pass. So there is a point where you pray and believe and another point where you receive. Between point A and point B you rejoice. You turn the switch of faith on and you rejoice. Faith expresses itself by giving glory to God.

But there is another reason we need to rejoice in the Lord and add the spirit of joy in our life. I have not found people who really believe in God who did not rejoice. It's only those who have mental assumption who think they are fighting the fight of faith but with no joy involved. And I never see them breakthrough. Only when it becomes real to you that you really believe that you have received then you rejoice. If you could not rejoice it is because you have not really believe you have received. And you could not act as if you have received. What would you do if you have prayed for something and it has not manifested yet. You act in faith. What happens when it manifests? You will be rejoicing. So why don't you rejoice now even before you see it manifesting? That is an expression of your faith. Abraham gave glory to God. You spend 15 minutes or an hour on that and you will see your life and faith transformed. Health flows to you. Prosperity flows to you. It is added onto you. Not only that -you don't get anxious or worry because the joy of the Lord is your strength. You rejoice in God.

Every time you are anxious or worried, your body starts producing certain kind of secretion that begins to cause your body to be more subjected to attacks of sicknesses. You actually literally lose your strength. But when you are filled with joy and have a merry heart, your whole being is lifted up. That's strength that is added to you. There is a greater release of energy into your life in whatever you are doing in God.

That also speaks about those who are in the ministry or those of you who are leading songs. Well when you are going to do it get joy. Turn the switch of faith on. Turn the joy button on. After all your preparation you may become very tense. Turn the joy button on and then when you come out of that you are relaxed, cool, you are at rest and God could flow through you better. If you are in the ministry and you want to operate the gifts of the Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit will not operate if you are very tense. The gifts of the Spirit will only operate when you are relaxed and at rest. How do you get relaxed and rested? By rejoicing in God. So the third reason is your expression of your faith in God. If you believe you will receive then rejoice. If you are in the business world, you are praying for something and it has not manifested yet. What do you do? Laugh the laughter of faith. Rejoice in the Lord.

Prov.15: 13 *A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance. But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.* Do you know that people look better when they have joy than they have sorrow? You don't believe it. When you are very sorrowful take a snap shot of yourself with all your sorrows. Then later when you are rejoicing take another snap shot. Compare the two and you will see that you look better when you are joyful than when you are in misery and sorrow. For a cheerful heart lifts up the countenance.

Do you know that God tells you that when you are giving unto God you have to have cheer in your heart, which is joy? The fourth area is 2 Cor.9: 6-8 *But this I say he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.* God loves it when you have cheer in your life. When you give joyfully verse 8 *And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

When you have joy you have blessings. Remember Deut.28: 47 we said where if you have been blessed and you lose your joy. You lose your goods. Then we said the same principle applies that when you have nothing and you have joy it will bring forth goods into your life. We have this principle in 2 Cor.9 It tells you that when you obey God in your giving and you have joy. You give cheerfully you have great joy. You have the spirit of joy before the spirit of prosperity comes, and that verse 8

tells you that you shall have all sufficiency in all things. Verse 8 is based on verse 7. Verse 7 did not just tell you to give. How did it tell you to give? It tells you that you should give and it tells you how you should give. The how is as important as the giving part. The emphasis is on the spirit that you give. Your giving should not be out of a spirit of grudgingly or the spirit of necessity where you are moved by circumstances and not by the Lord. But you give moved by joy. And when joy is in your life then verse 8 come. You will receive grace. *God will make grace abound in your life.* Grace is the impartation of God into your spirit so that you could do above what you are normally able to do. Grace enables you to do beyond your ability. Isn't it wonderful you can receive grace just by rejoicing in God. When you rejoicing in God, the grace of God comes into your life.

Verse 9 tells us that God make all sufficiency in your life. You have more than enough. Why? All because you are a cheerful giver and have a spirit of joy with you. 2 Cor.8 it says in verse 2 that in a great trial the abundance of their joy. The bible says that they were not only in poverty. They were in deep poverty. Even they were in poverty they did not have sorrow. Some people that are in poverty and sorrow never come out of it. But if you have joy, the spirit of joy will cause you to rise up above your circumstances. The spirit of joy will elevate you. The spirit of joy makes you immune to sinking. The spirit of joy will prevent you from sinking. When joy comes into your life you will rise up. You will rise up above the circumstances of this life. You will rise up above your poverty. You will rise up above all that the devil try to put on you. Do you know something about the apostles? When they were persecuted they didn't mourn. They rejoiced in the Lord. Because they know the devil can't steal their joy. The devil can't steal their power. If the devil can't steal their joy, the devil can't steal their health. If the devil can't steal your joy, the devil cannot touch you. Nehemiah 8:10 says the joy of the Lord is our strength. If the joy of the Lord is on you, the strength of the Lord is on you. The devil dare not come near you.

So here they are in deep poverty. The only thing they have is the spirit of joy. And the spirit of joy operates with the spirit of grace. In verse 2 they were able according to their ability freely and willingly to give. When you have the spirit of joy, you will do beyond your ability. When you have the spirit of joy, you surpass what you normally can do. If you want your optimum and operate above your optimum, have the spirit of joy. Do you know that sometimes people studying for

examinations are so tensed up they operate only at 70% efficiency. But if they could be at rest, relax, have the joy of God, they will operate at 100% efficiency. Plus they will have God's ability in their life. God supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus.

When joy comes prosperity comes. When joy comes health comes. When joy comes strength comes. When joy comes power comes. When joy comes the ability of God comes. When joy is in your life, you are able to do beyond your ability.

So the fourth point is the spirit of joy is tapped on the spirit of grace. And it will cause you to rise above all circumstances. That is why God tells you in 2 Cor.9:7 Be a cheerful giver. Have the spirit of joy. It is important what kind of spirit you give with. Some people give with a grumbling spirit. There is no blessing involved. The spirit of giving must be the spirit of joy. Then grace abound. Sometimes when I go to a meeting and I will sit there in the crowd. The offering time comes around. I used to hear people pass comments. These people have the wrong spirit. It is better for them to keep their money. But there are those who sincerely say here is an opportunity. These are the people who are going to be blessed. The spirit and the way you give is as important as the giving itself. The spirit of joy.

Prov.15 Remember joy will prevent the thorns of this life from touching you. The joy of the Lord gives you the strength. And the joy of the Lord is an expression of your faith in God. Then in Prov.15:13-15 *A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken. The heart of him who has understanding seek knowledge but the mouth of fools speaks on foolishness. Verse 15 all the days of the afflicted are evil but he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast.* Remember Ps.23 *He will prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies.* When you have the joy of the Lord in your life, you have a continual feast. Whether economic depression or oppression or recession, you will have a continual feast if you will rejoice. The world will be afflicted because the devil will put sorrow on their life. But if the devil cannot steal your joy, I don't care whether the economic recession or depression, as long as you have joy the devil cannot touch you. You will be blessed.

Even if Egypt is cursed you will be the land of Goshen. Where there is darkness in Egypt, you will have light in Goshen. Where the spirit of the Lord is you will have a continual feast. That means that the feast never ends. Remember Deut.28: 47 It tells you that if you serve the Lord with joy and gladness, you will not lose your goods. If you don't serve the Lord with gladness, you will lose it. Your feast will not continue. But here a merry heart will have a continual feast. You continually taste the blessings of God. A feast is a symbol of prosperity. A feast means great abundance. When you have a feast you have abundance and you want to continue in it, remain in it. Have the spirit of joy. The spirit of joy is able to give you continual feast even when the entire world around you is afflicted. Just like joy and a merry heart do good like a medicine. A merry heart brings with it a continual feast. The Lord shall prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. The devil cannot touch you if you have joy. Fill your life with joy. Fill your home with joy. Fill your ministry with joy. Get rid of all those sour faces. If you have the spirit of joy, it attracts prosperity.