

# Divinely Blessed & Restored

## J-O-Y

Submitted by: Min. Doris B. Ryans  
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*When was the last time you felt real joy? More than contentment, more intense than feeling happy, it's a feeling that is way down in your soul. To know real "joy" is to know Jesus!*

Joy is defined as an emotion of lively pleasure, happiness, arising from present or expected good. A source or cause of gladness or delight. If we're honest with ourselves, many of us have been conditioned to believe joy can be obtained through material things and/or accomplishments. But these things only provide momentary happiness...then life returns to its humdrum existence.

Is that because "joy" is an elusive dream? Something only select individuals get to enjoy. No, it is not reserved only for a select few, but it **is** reserved for those who have a relationship with God. Joy enters your life when we choose to have a genuine relationship with God and His son, Jesus. Because, when God's Spirit lives in us, real "joy" is what the Spirit produces in our hearts as we have intimate communion with our Father.

Christ made it clear that he intended that His joy would become his followers joy. His word tells us in John 15:7 - 11: 7 *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11I have told you this so that **my joy** may be in you and that **your joy** may be complete. NIV.*

But amid the hustle and bustle of the Holiday season and in the tradition of gift giving we can neglect our relationship with our Father. We can lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. At a time when we are commemorating an occasion that should elicit great emotion; pleasure, happiness and delight as we celebrate the birth of our Messiah – "Jesus" - we can lose our "joy".

How does this happen? To have joy we must be in fellowship with the Father. This means we are spending time in prayer, reading His Word, and worshipping Him. It requires a relationship with God, one that is being nurtured, not placed aside in our busyness. An intimate relationship with God is not an option in a Christian's life, it's a necessity. As Nehemiah said..."The joy of the Lord is my strength."

If you have an intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father, you **will** have true joy in your life. An intimate relationship with God means you have given him the proper place in your life. I heard a minister say once that there is a formula for joy and it's easy to remember because the formula uses the words of the word joy. The formula is as follow:

Jesus first in your life  
+Others second  
+Yourself last \_\_\_\_\_ \  
= JOY

**J**=Jesus comes first. The word tells us: "**Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be yours as well.**" (Matthew 6:33) "**When you seek Me with all your heart, you will surely find Me.**" (Jeremiah 29:13) "**Whoever comes to me I will never send away empty.**" (John 6:37) When Jesus is first, all the rest falls into place.

**O**=Others come second in life. To have true joy, you need a servant's heart, one that wants to help others. Finding joy means placing others before you. The word tells us we are to love God above all and to love your neighbor as yourself.

**Y**=Yourself comes last. This doesn't mean you neglect self. You're not asked to be a martyr and it certainly doesn't mean always saying "yes" when others ask. But if you have the heart of a servant others must come before you.

As we celebrate Christmas I ask you to do more than think about gift giving and "all I want for Christmas"...take time to look at Christmas spiritually. First, remember "the reason for the season" - we were given a precious gift when God sent His son. Second, look at the significance of this event and what this gift has given us. We can start by looking at the name of Jesus. In Biblical times, a name had special significance because names were used to express the character of the person. There is no name more significant than the name of the person whose birth we are celebrating at Christmas. In Matthew 1:21 an angelic messenger told Joseph: "**She will bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**" Isaiah 9:6 told us "**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**" and the Word tells us:

- ❖ It is the name by which we must be saved (*Acts 4:12*)
- ❖ It is the name that is to set the tone for Christian behavior (*Col. 3:17*)
- ❖ It is the name which, one day in the future, every knee shall bow (*Phil 2:10-11*)

As you can see the Name of Jesus is a powerful name. But, you must accept Jesus, to have the power of His name. As you fellowship with others this month, do so carrying the message of the Savior's birth. This time of the year provide an excellent opportunity to show love to others and acquaint them with Jesus. What better way to show love than to carry the message of God's love for us "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that who so ever believeth on him, should not perish but have everlasting life** John 3:16 to those that have not accepted Jesus as their Savior. As you share this good news I guarantee you will experience JOY, unspeakable JOY, in your life!

# Don't Let Satan Steal Your Joy

Satan's goal is to "*steal your joy*". It is very common during the holiday season for you to feel far from "joyous" as you worry and fret about preparations for family celebrations and the financial strain of buying gifts. John 10:10 tell us: *The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it<sup>[a]</sup> overflows).* AMP

We must not allow these worry and busyness of the season to over take us and "*steal our joy*". God's words provide helpful instruction about things we can do to keep joy present in our life....

- **Allow our steps to be ordered by the Lord.** Proverbs 16:9 tell us: A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure. AMP If you are doing things that no longer add joy to your life, you must be willing to change. The Holy Spirit will lead you if you are willing to follow.
- **Simplify your life.** Satan will use "busyness" to steal your joy. Satan wants to steal your time, have you living an unbalanced life with no time for family, friends and God.
- **Be quick to forgive.** Learn how to forgive and forget - both are necessary to move on. A spirit of unforgiveness block our fellowship with others and God. Ask the Lord to give you the power to forgive yourself and others.
- **Obey God.** Walking in obedience to God is one of the best ways to have a joyful and blessed life. Psalm 37:4 say: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart". (NIV)
- **Be yourself.** Being satisfied and happy with yourself is key to being joyful. Learn to accept and love the unique individual God has created you to be.
- **Learn to be content.** As Philippians 4:11 say: "... for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to a point where I am not disturbed or anxious) in whatever state I am.
- **Be confident in God's Lordship over your life.** Proverbs 3:5 tells us to "Lean on, trust in and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

Commit to living a joyous life. Remember the words of the Psalmist? He says, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." He doesn't say tomorrow is, or yesterday was, he says that today is the day. Joy is an emotional state we should strive to be in continually. That means we should keep joy in our hearts all year round, not just during the Christmas Holiday.

## HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST?

Our purpose in this article and daily scriptures is to encourage a heart-to-heart relationship with God. If you do not know God in a personal way, we invite you to make the first step today to receive God's love and the salvation that only Jesus Christ can give. Here are five steps you can take to receive salvation:

1. Recognize you are a sinner and need salvation. The Bible tells us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
2. Repent of your sins. Sin separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them you are forgiven. The Bible says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
3. Believe in Jesus. God sent His Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. The Bible says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life: (John 3:16).
4. Receive His Salvation. Jesus Christ is a gift you must receive and welcome to live in your heart. He promises: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God: (John 1:12).
5. Confess your belief verbally. The Bible assures "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved: (Rom. 10:9).

You now have been born again! Tell some else your good news and connect yourself with a church home as soon as possible. God Bless and Keep You!

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## December

### **Rev. Doris B. Ryans' Preaching Engagement**

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ecorse, Michigan  
Wednesday, December 3, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.

### **Rev. Doris B. Ryans' Preaching Engagement**

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ecorse, Michigan  
Wednesday, December 17, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.

## 2009

### **Save the Date – 3<sup>rd</sup> Women's Retreat**

"A Call to Finish Well"

Place: TBA

February 6-7, 2009

**Make sure that you check our website for updates and upcoming events!!**