



Say to wisdom, “you are my sister” And make understanding your closest friend. For they will keep you from the immoral woman.
Proverbs 7:4-5a

Women's Discipleship Group – 2006
HELPMATES, HANDMAIDENS & HARLOTS ONLINE BIBLE STUDY
EMOTIONAL LIFE SERIES
LESSON # 5 – JOY TO YOUR WORLD
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Definition of joy: JOY is more than an emotion. Joy is a spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is the indwelling presence of God in the life a believer that overflows into the lives of others and thereby gives *joy to the world*. Joy is the key to inner strength, endurance and soul satisfaction.

OPENING STATEMENT:

For many women the Christmas and New Year's holiday represents a time of joy – only when certain factors are in place. Like an annual stage play, some women need a good script with lots of props in order to create the perfect Christmas story.

The cast of characters and props for a perfect Christmas are as follows:

1. A big loving family.
2. A loving man in your life, or a hot date.
3. Lots of happy, grateful children.
4. Money to shop for food, gifts and a red or black dress, etc.
5. People giving you lots of gifts (especially gold and diamonds)
6. Turkey, dressing, pies, cookies and other goodies.
7. Entertaining family, friends, church and co-workers.

There are many women who will spend the upcoming Christmas and New Year holiday feeling sad, lonely, rejected and disappointment because things are not up to their annual expectations for Christmas.

This sad story is usually based on one of the following hindrances to a joyful Christmas.

1. A feuding family or no family at all.
2. No loving man in your life.
3. Problems with children.
4. No money for shopping, gifts or a new red or black dress.
5. Overwhelmed by responsibilities and personal problems.
6. Inability to travel or to be where you would like to be.
7. Alone, with no close friends; or friends won't be around at Christmas.

There is however a solution to having a joyful Christmas regardless of your circumstances. The word Christmas comes from “Christ” and “mass.” The ancient Catholic Church started a yearly mass that focused on prayer and a musical celebration in remembrance of Christ. Eventually this celebration became known as the Christ Mass or Christmas. The original Christmas celebration was all about remembering Christ Jesus and celebrating the gift of salvation that he brought to the world. I want to encourage you to remember to celebrate the Christ of Christmas and not the false practices of the world. Luke Chapter 2 gives us a clear example of how to find joy at Christmas:

Luke 2:10 – The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of GREAT JOY that is for all people.” There are times when the message that the Lord sends you is not what you want to hear, or how you want to hear it. You become afraid because you fail to recognize that you are hearing “good news” that will lead to **great joy**. It might be a change in your job, a season away from the people you love, or God revealing to you that he is doing a new work in your life. You may not understand it at the time, but in the end God promises that you are on your way to **great joy**.

Luke 2:11 – Today in the City of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

The angel announced that *a Savior is born to you*. Nothing can bring greater joy than to know that God has sent someone into your life who has the power to save you from bondage, sorrow, sickness, poverty and hell. To be saved from a defeated life, is exactly what happens when you find the Savior. As you get closer to the Lord your joy will increase even when your circumstances and possessions are not what you desire.

Luke 2:12 – This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

This passage of scripture holds a great mystery. The “*sign*” that leads to great joy is found in the fact that Jesus was born in a barn and laid in a manger (a feeding trough for animals). But the circumstances of his birth did not keep him from fulfilling his destiny. When you take time to read the “*signs*” that the Lord sends your way, (most of which are found in the Word of God) you can have **great joy** because just like baby Jesus, you are on your way to victory in spite of adverse circumstances. The signs in your life are as follows: You are still alive, when you could have been dead. You are still in your right mind when you could have lost it. Things could be much worse in your life, but the Lord is keeping you. Say the following words out loud:
IN SPITE OF MY CIRCUMSTANCES, I AM ON MY WAY TO GREAT JOY!

The following is a list of things you can do in order to have a joyful Christmas.

1. *Philippians 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!* To rejoice simply means to re-hearse the things that the Lord has done for you. Make a list of your blessings and be sure to include the smallest and biggest blessings. Your health, food, clothing and family. You will find joy, when you re-joyce over the things that we sometimes take for granted. If you run out of fuel you would re-fuel. If you run out of joy, remember to re-joyce.
2. *Nehemiah 8:10 – Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet and send portions to those who having nothing to prepare. For this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”* In order to find joy, the Word of God tells us to have a celebration and to remember the less fortunate. Invite someone to your house. Visit or send a package to someone in jail, the military or in a hospital. You will find joy and strength when you put your feelings aside and celebrate Jesus by blessing someone in need. No matter what you’re going through, this is the season to forget about your troubles and find a way to celebrate. It will renew your strength.
3. *In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* In order to find joy turn off the TV and the music and practice being in the presence of God. Worshipping in God’s presence always leads to joy. Give yourself a present by forgiving those who hurt you. Ask the Lord to give you the gift of restoring your broken dreams or giving you a new vision. Start the New Year with fasting and prayer...joy will surely come.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES FOR GOD'S PROMISE FOR JOY

Psalm 30:5 – Weeping will not last.

Isaiah 61:3 – Comfort for those who mourn.

John 15:9-11 – That your joy may be full.

1 Peter 1:6-9 – Testing that leads to joy.

Galatians 5:22 – The fruit of the Spirit.

Acts 16:34 – Believing in God.

Dear Sisters:

This is the last lesson in the series on Helpmate – Handmaidens – Harlots. It has been a blessing to share this study with so many beautiful sisters.

In February 2007, I invite you to participate in our new Bible Study series.

TOPIC: BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT – Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.

Have a blessed Christmas and a Spirit-led New Year.

Terri McFaddin-Solomon