

Prayer of the Week:

O Lord, you have taught us that without love, all our deeds are worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you; grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Twenty)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.



Joy

Phil. 3:4-14 (NRSV)

September 20th, 2020

False Bases of Joy

1. Achievement

The problem with achievement-based joy is this: Your joy is dependent upon upward momentum in life.

2. Avoidance

The trouble with trying to find joy through avoiding pain is we simply can't do this. Pain ALWAYS has a way of finding our lives.

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True Bases of Joy

1. "Receivment"

Philippians 3:4b-14 (NRSV)

The apostle Paul had achieved a lot and had all kinds of reasons to have confidence and joy based on achievement (he lists some of those in this passage).

He holds up all these things (achievement) and then holds up this one thing (knowing Christ) and says, "The one thing makes all the other things seem insignificant."

For the Apostle Paul, his attitude shifted from achievement to "receivment."

Joy is found in what we have received, not on what we have achieved. Gratitude is the posture of our hearts that recognizes all that we have received.

"Gratitude moves us away from the narrow-minded focus on fault and lack and to the wider perspective of benefit and abundance." (The Book of Joy, pg. 242)

2. Acceptance

There is a really interesting ancient Jewish literature called Ecclesiastes. When we read this poetry and wisdom, it offers us some really compelling things.

"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" -Ecclesiastes 1:2

The word "meaningless" is the Hebrew word "*hevel*" which means "vapor."

Life is like a vapor.

But then the wisdom takes an unexpected turn...

"Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! 8 Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne! Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun." -Ecclesiastes 9:7-9a

Joy does not come from avoidance or ignorance or naiveté.

Joy comes from fully entering into the fragility of it all because then you can learn to appreciate it.

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