

## Completing Joy

I John 1:3-7

5/27/07

### Intro

We come now to the book of first John, written by the Apostle John, son of Zebedee. Although John and his brother James are called “sons of thunder,” John was also known as the apostle of love. He also referred to himself five times as the ‘disciple whom Jesus loved.’ It was into John’s care that Jesus placed his mother as he was dying on the cross.

Most commentators believe John is an old man by the time he writes this and his other books. He had been exiled to the island Patmos by the Emperor Domitian for several years where he received The Revelation.

John is writing to warn the churches about false teachers that were trying to draw people away from the church. He takes a straightforward approach; he teaches them the truth so they can discern error.

It was in John’s gospel where we hear Jesus say, “If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” He says that he is writing that their joy be made complete.

**These are insights in how God purifies, matures,  
and completes our joy.**

### **I. Begin with Seeking Fellowship with God**

- What John has seen and heard as an Apostle he is proclaiming to us so that we might have fellowship with the Father, His Son, and with them.
- God is our Father, Jesus is His Son; we are children.

### A. Home is where joy begins

- God is the one who created the idea of family and family is designed to be the source of joy and fulfillment.
- Good family is truly a cure for loneliness.

**Illus – When I went off to college, I joined up with a fraternity because it gave me a sense of belonging to brothers. The problem was that they weren’t good for my soul. Therefore my joy was definitely not complete.**

- There are really two issues here:
  - Our separation from God causes lostness in heart and in the reality of eternity.
  - The problems of being part of the wrong relationships.

**I Corinthians 15:33, Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”**

- The basis of our relationship in family is that we hold many things in common.

**Illus – In our family we have common blood and the same heritage, but also we have built the shared memories of camping or going to the lake, warm fires, trips to the beach, Christmas; in other words, shared lives.**

**Ephesians 3:14-19 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so**

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

B. The joy of the Lord is our strength

- When Paul gives a list of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, joy is second on the list after love.
- We must not let this fact escape us, that the joy of the Lord is our strength.
- He is the One who gives your life purpose and meaning and there is great joy in knowing that God is in you and working through you.

**Illus – My daughter Chelsea was talking recently about what she wants to do with her life. She wanted to be a teacher so she could touch the lives of children, but she also wanted to do something filled with adventure and significance. There is a desire we all share to do the same. This is from God so that we fulfill this desire in Him.**

- When Israel had returned from their exile in Babylon, they were going through the rubble and found a copy of the law. When it had been read to all the people, they began to weep for what they had lost, but Nehemiah turned them instead toward joy...

**Nehemiah 8:10, Then he said to them, “Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”**

**II. Let Joy be Matured in Christ**

A. Joy is purified in Christ

- There are many places in scripture where it is clear that God’s goal for our lives is that our joy be full, or complete.
- But there is also a purifying process that God allows in our lives for this very purpose.

**Jeremiah 48:11, Moab has been at ease since his youth; he has also been undisturbed, like wine on its dregs, and he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile. Therefore he retains his flavor, and his aroma has not changed.**

**Illus --** In the days of the Old Testament wine was made by crushing grapes and pouring the juice into large vessels so the ‘lees’ or ‘dregs’; the impurities could settle to the bottom.

The vessel would then be poured into another to separate it from the impurities. This would be done as many as 12-15 times.

- Not only does God fill us with the Holy Spirit, He purifies our lives by not allowing the stagnation of allowing us to settle on the ‘dregs.’

B. Joy is built on trusting God

- There is a maturity in joy when we come to the place of trusting God even when things are difficult, when we go through even great trials.

**Habakkuk 3:17-19, Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on high places.**

- “Perfect love casts out all fear,” John also wrote in this same letter. That is the key to maturing in joy.
- There is a joy that is based on a reaction to the situation, and there is a joy *in spite of the situation*.

**Illus** – Marriage is a place where we can demonstrate that on a regular basis; like when my wife came home with a ferret...and then another dog...

- But what about when life gives us some serious trials and challenges?

**Romans 8:37-39, No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything**

**else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. NIV**

**III. Walk in the Light**

- God is light, John wrote, and in Him there is no darkness of all.
- Light reveals the truth while darkness hides the truth.

A. Open the eyes of your heart

- This means to have a willingness and desire for God's light.
- If we delight in God's light, the joy of our walk is matured because we are convinced that God's way is right and trust that it will guide us into the best places in life.

**Illus** – A pastor told the story of a driving from Texas to California with a couple of young men and they decided at the last minute to take a detour to see the Grand Canyon. But they arrived late at night and threw some sleeping bags out for the night. In the morning light, they woke up to discover they had camped only feet from the edge of the canyon.

**Psalm 119:105, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**

B. Sin will rob you of joy

- If we walk in the light, not only will we have fellowship with Christ, we will be cleansed from sin.

**I John 2:1-2 He is writing that we may not sin.**

- If anything will rob us of our joy, surely it's sin.
- One of the main reasons John wrote this letter was to confront a false teaching called Gnosticism that was bothering the church.
- This doctrine taught that Jesus didn't come in the flesh; that there is a separation of our flesh and spirit; and that what happens in the flesh is irrelevant. *This is still a modern day problem.*

**Illus – Some people wonder how much they can sin before God will disown them. Imagine a son asking that same question of his father. What can I do to be disowned? But a better question is, 'why am I asking that question?' It's better to walk with him in fellowship and joy.**

**John 15:9-11, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."**