

## Sermon Series: Pursuing Godliness

Sermon Title: A Godly Person is a Joyful Person

August 11, 2019

Today's Scripture: 1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, (ESV)

Introduction: This is not a message primarily about how to fight depression. That is beyond the scope of this sermon. But, for those suffering from depression, or bouts of sadness, or feelings of gloom and sometimes despair, this message will be more than a band-aid. It can indeed assist those suffering from bouts of depression. Nevertheless, since more and more Christians are fighting depressive disorders it might be a good idea for us to briefly mention a few things about them. Here they are: 1) 10% of the current population is struggling with clinical depression. 2) 41% of women are too embarrassed to seek help. 3) 80% of depressed people are currently not receiving help for their depression. 4) 15% of depressed people will commit suicide. 5) One in four women will have a severe or major depression in their lifetime and one out of eight men will.<sup>1</sup>

So, is there a biblical antidote for depression? The answer is yes and no. There are a number of causes for depression including hormonal imbalances that a professional would be able to diagnose and treat. You can't get that from the Word of God, but you can change your chemical imbalances gradually by meditating on the Word of God. So the answer is yes, if you combine it with physical help as well.

Main point: A godly person is one who is becoming so aware of God's sovereign goodwill and His abundant grace that their joy is becoming un-extinguishable.

1. Our God-caused salvation is the bedrock of all our joy.
  - 1 Peter 1:3–9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. [6] In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, [7] so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [8] Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ccesonline.com/counseling/depression.htm>

you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (ESV)

○ Think on these truths: Our salvation came about by

1. His great mercy.
  2. His causation, providing for us
  3. A new life by being born again, and as a result we have
  4. A living hope.
  5. Because our Savior was raised from the dead, and so will we be raised,
  6. To enjoy an eternity of intense peace, pleasure, love, fellowship and above all the smile of the Father and the Son, and the Spirit.
  7. And, that gift cannot be taken from us because our faith is being guarded by God's power so we won't lose it.
- Is there a physical connection to thinking these thoughts and our sense of happiness and joy? Absolutely. Serotonin is the main hormone in our bodies that affect our moods. Our brains are designed to produce more of that hormone via our thoughts. The more we reflect on happy memories and eternal truths like we just mentioned, the more serotonin your body will produce.
  - For those who might consider taking an anti-depressant medication, consider that your body over the long term will build up its own tolerance and they will become less and less effective. Short term seems O.K., long term seems destructive.<sup>2</sup>

2. Our love for this world is our main joy stealer.

- As mentioned, there are many causes for sadness and depression that kill our joy. One of them for young mothers is exhaustion since never seem to get a break. But the greatest joy stealer is what I call the "spiritual splits". Spiritual splits is when a person has one foot in this world and one foot in the next and the two worlds are moving further apart.
- Is God really good and is his will for you really goodwill. That's the issue. If you truly believe that, then you will not be choosing an alternative god. Here are some:
  - **Pain avoidance.** Whether it is physical pain, relational pain, or grieving pain it all hurts. It's one thing to grieve, suffer relational loss or hurt with physical pain and struggle with that, but it is another to think that you don't deserve it or that God is not good to give it to you. You have one foot in the world and another partially in the one to come. If both feet were in the one to come, then you would say something like this, "God I know that every perfect gift comes down from heaven from you and if

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-are-the-real-risks-of-antidepressants>

this suffering in pain is a gift from you then thank you. I know you are preparing me to experience it for the sake of your glory and to bring comfort to others who are going through the same thing.”

- **Secure Future.** Proverbs 3:5–6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (ESV) Psalm 37:18–19 The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance. (ESV)
- **Fulfilled Dreams and Expectations.** Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (ESV)
- David says of those who chase after other gods: Psalm 16:4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. (ESV)
- The Christians in Macedonia have much to teach us about having only one God to worship. 2 Corinthians 8:1–2 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. (ESV)
- Pastors can get awfully grumpy on Sunday afternoons and Monday mornings if the attendance was down and the offerings were bad. John teaches us pastors what ought to bring us joy and that is: 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (ESV) This ought to be a parent’s joy as well.

### Application

What is your greatest joy killer? Get it firmly fixed in your mind. Now pray with me. “Heavenly Father, I repent of trusting in other things to give me joy. I surrender this area of my life into your hands right now. \_\_\_\_\_ With your help I will quickly turn from trusting in that area and run quickly to you for my source of all my happiness.”