

Complete Joy

Ephesians 5:1-4

Part 3

Ephesians 5:1-4 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, **but instead let there be thanksgiving.**

I. The source of real joy

Gratitude is the most logical and appropriate response of a person to God.

A. The nature of gratitude

Gratitude comes from:

- Acknowledging God as great and independent Creator and Sovereign
- Acknowledging the great worth of the created world
- Acknowledging yourself as undeserving of God's goodness

B. General expressions of gratitude

1. Thank God for this greatness and sovereignty
2. Thank God for salvation
3. Thank God for participation in His glory
4. Thank God for becoming part of His family
5. Thank God for participation in His work
6. Thank God for hope
7. Thank God for revelation
8. Thank God for His deeds
9. Thank people who do good to you

C. The transforming impact of gratitude

Ephesians 5:7-11 Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Ephesians 5:18-21 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1. Gratitude provides joy in tribulations

Acts 16:23-25 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them

a. The Holy Spirit teaches to see the good which God is providing

Lamentations 3:1 I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath;

Lamentations 3:10-16 He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding; ¹¹ he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate; ¹² he bent his bow and set me as a target for his arrow. ¹³ He drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver; ¹⁴ I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the object of their taunts all day long. ¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. ¹⁶ He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;

Lamentations 3:17-20 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; ¹⁸ so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord." ¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! ²⁰ My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

Lamentations 3:21-26 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: ²² The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

• God's love is unchanging

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דָּוָד - Steadfast love (ESV).
Lovingkindness (NASB)
Loyal love (NET)
Great love (NIV)

- **God's faithfulness is unchanging**

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Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, **but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,** and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

- **God is my portion and my inheritance**

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Psalms 73:3-5 For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. ⁵ They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.

Psalms 73:13-14 All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning.

Psalms 73:24-28 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. ²⁸ **But for me it is good to be near God;** I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

- **God is gracious to those who hope in Him**

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- **The one who waits for the salvation of the Lord, will inevitably receive grace**

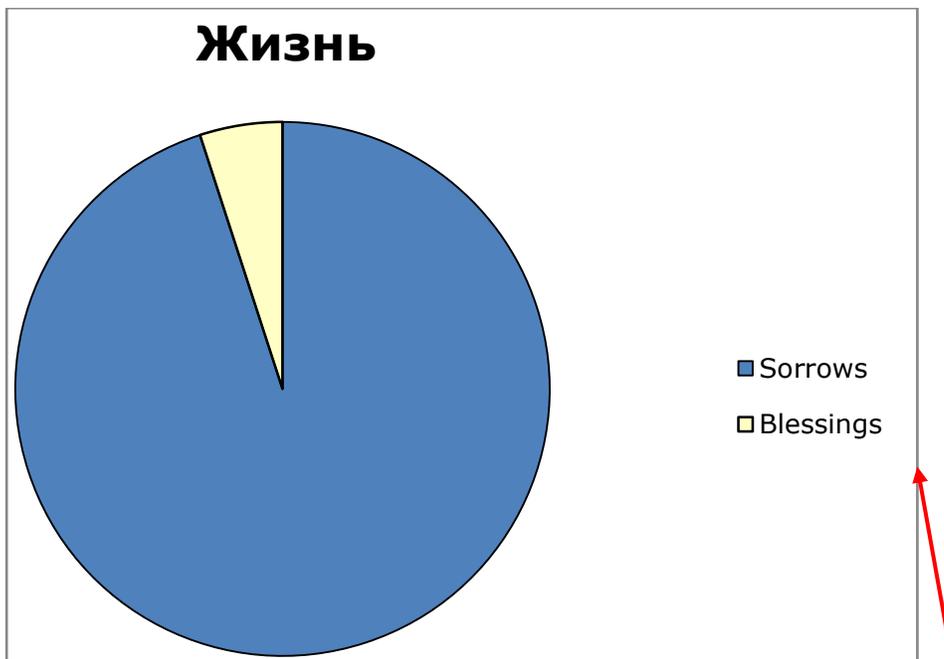
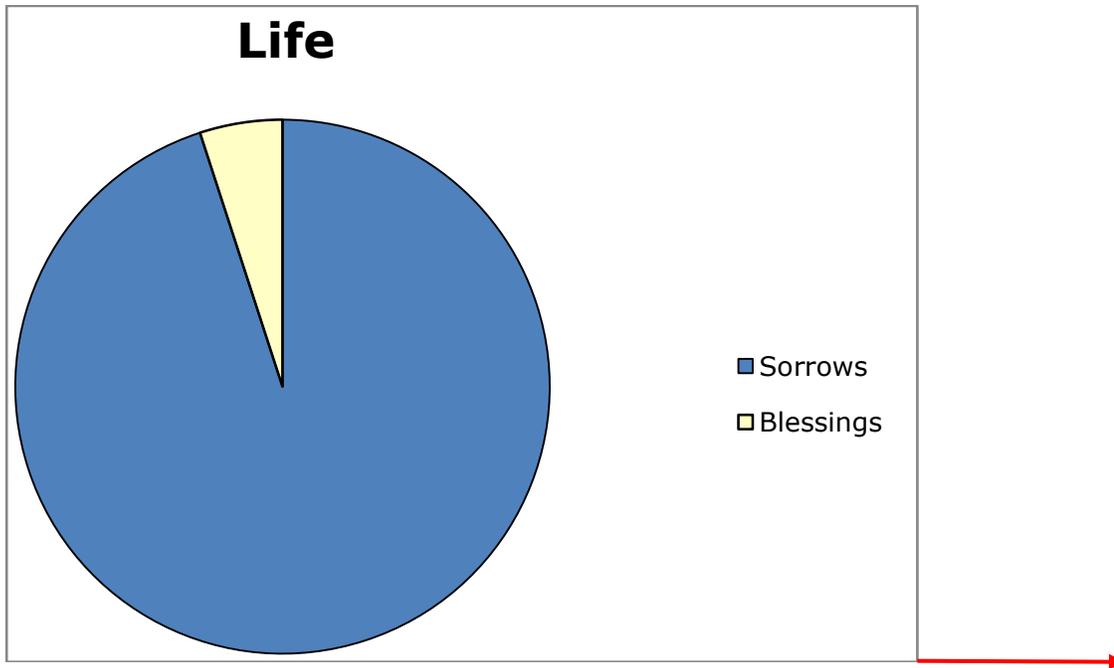
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"Unbelief looks to tribulations. Faith can look to the promises. This is why unbelief turns our deeds into slavery. Faith counts deeds as love. Unbelief pulls you down to despair. Faith produces patience, with which it expects the final result."

Charles Bridges

Principle #1

Focus your attention on God and blessing you have in Him instead of focusing on difficulties.



With gratitude rejoice over what you have instead of torturing yourself over what's missing.

Learn to see good in people and circumstances, so that you could thank God for them.

b. The Holy Spirit teaches us to see blessings in God given afflictions

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Job 33:17-18 that he may turn man aside from his deed and conceal pride from a man; ¹⁸ he keeps back his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.

1 Peter 1:6-8 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, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Be thankful to God for the wounds which force you to run to Christ.

Principle #2

Understanding that God controls our circumstances, understanding that His will is good, pleasing, and perfect, knowing that our afflictions lead us to greater blessing we can sincerely be grateful to Him.

2. Gratitude transforms life

Ephesians 5:18-21 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

• Is your heart filled with praising God and thanking Him through this activity?

"A Biblical perspective... It took a huge team of very smart folks to design and build our spacecraft to sustain life and operate safely with little margin for error. It certainly did not design or build itself! We've been reviewing spacecraft environmental systems... 25 liters of oxygen per hour per crewmember consumed-need to replenish; 20 liters of carbon dioxide produced per hour per crewmember- need to remove; 0.5 liters of water put in the atmosphere per day per crewmember-need to remove. Pressure ranges, temperature ranges-need to control. We have to manage all of that and much more very closely through the flight to maintain a healthy and safe habitation in a very hostile environment....life critical!

"For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is God!), who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it empty, He formed it to be inhabited!): 'I am the LORD, and there is no other.'" (Is 45:18)

"Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them." (Ps 111:2)

I love this stuff!!"

Jeff Williams, astronaut

• Is your heart filled with humility and readiness to put others first or with pride and self-affirmation?

- Is your heart filled with the fear of God when you do this?

Psalm 2:11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Prayerful Implications

- Gratitude comes from a heart that knows the greatness and goodness of God while recognizing self as unworthy.
- Gratitude must be cultivated in your heart, beginning each day by focusing your inner world on God and His manifold blessings that you have in Him.
- Going through tribulations and afflictions we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, in order to have His perspective on our circumstances and see the blessings for which we can be thankful to God for.
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with gratitude, we can learn to be joyful with complete joy in all circumstances of life.