

Real World JOY

Narrator walks Joyce Glimpsin to her rocking chair: she sits down and gets to her knitting.

He turns and addresses the audience.

Joy is a major theme of the Christmas story, “great joy” in fact!

Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Joy is “a vivid emotion of pleasure and gladness” So it’s a commodity that we can all agree on

To be human is to desire pleasure and gladness. Life is the pursuit of pleasure and gladness.

A vivid experience is better than a partial experience.

A permanently vivid state of pleasure and gladness would be best.

But to say that is to see that there are different degrees of joy. And there are different sources of joy, different sorts of joy.

1. **Circumstantial joy:** pleasure and gladness based on circumstances: “happiness” / hap = luck/what just “happens” → Some people “happen” to have pleasant circumstances and good health and the stuff of which “circumstantial joy” is experience, and that is what makes them joyful. Other people find themselves in other circumstances. **“And that is what makes them so non-joyful”.** → To blank slide

→ SCENE THREE: JOY [A nurse enters and gets busy doing “nurse things”]

Nurse: Good morning, Mrs. Glimpsin. How are we feeling today?

Joyce: Well, you know what they say! “There’s no point in complaining,”

Nurse: Right!

Joyce: “There’s no point at all in complaining! No one will listen to you if you do!”

Nurse: Are you not feeling well today?

Joyce: Well, you know what they say! “If you don’t have your health, you don’t have anything.”

Nurse: I suppose that’s true, isn’t it!

Joyce: Yes it is. And you know what else?

Nurse: What’s that?

Joyce: I don’t have my health!

Nurse: Well, that’s too bad?

Joyce: To tell you the truth. I feel awful!

Nurse: I’m sorry to hear that, Mrs. Glimpsin

Joyce: I ache all over

Nurse: I’m sorry to hear that, Mrs. Glimpsin.

Joyce: And I didn’t sleep a wink last night.

Nurse: That’s too bad.

Joyce: And I’ve had some sort of heartburn for about a month now.

Nurse: That must be awful. Maybe we can get you something for that.

Joyce: It’s dreadful. I keep telling my doctor, but he doesn’t do a thing for me. And my head aches most days.

Nurse: You poor dear. We’ll have to see what we can do to help.

Joyce: And the food!

Nurse: You’re not enjoying your meals?

Joyce: I never have! But they’re getting worse!

Nurse: Really.

Joyce: They’re so bland. Every meal tastes like a plate full of futon!

Nurse: I’m sorry?

Joyce: You know what I mean! That awful stuff that looks like jello. With soy in it.

Nurse: You mean tofu!

Joyce: Exactly! [Pause] And the coffee is too hot! And too strong. And you want to know what else?

Nurse: I’m not sure!

Joyce: Everyone who works here talks too loud! If you don’t mind me saying, dear, your voice just cuts right through me. When you say Good Morning to me, it’s like a giant machete that just cuts right through me.

Nurse: [Finishes up her duties and begins to leave] Oh dear. We’re not having a very good day today, are we!

Joyce: Well, you know what they say! “There’s no point in complaining.”

Nurse: Use the bell if you need anything. [Nurse exits]

Joyce: “No one will listen to you if you do!”

Narrator: So... Joy: A vivid emotion of pleasure and gladness.

And one sort can be called:

1. **Circumstantial joy:** pleasure and gladness based on circumstances:

But then not everyone's circumstances are pleasant, and circumstances change, and not always for the better.... So then what? No joy? Not necessarily! There is a second sort! And it's not dependent on circumstances!

2. Volitional joy: pleasure and gladness as a choice --- → And some people know about this second sort of joy, and **they decide to put off pessimism and gloom and they just choose to be happy!** → To blank slide

[After a moment or two, Eleanor enters with several Christmas gifts]

Eleanor: Hello, Auntie Joyce!
Joyce: Oh Eleanor dear. You've come to see me. And you've brought some parcels.
Eleanor: Just a few little things for Christmas. I thought if I brought them now it would cheer up your room a little.
Joyce: Well thank you, dear
Eleanor: Oh, you're welcome, Auntie Joyce. [Gives her a kiss]
Joyce: Thank you ever so much!
Eleanor: It's so nice to see you, Auntie. And you are looking very nice this morning. How are you feeling?
Joyce: Can't complain, dear.
Eleanor: [sitting beside her] But it wouldn't be complaining just to tell me how you're really doing. Let me ask you again, How are you feeling?
Joyce: Well, actually, this is one of my better days.
Eleanor: Oh that's good to hear!
Joyce: I do get a little down sometimes.
Eleanor: Really?
Joyce: I do, but no one notices. We have to look after our own happiness, don't we, dear?
Eleanor: Yes, I guess we do.
Joyce: No one else can make us happy. We have to look after our own happiness ourselves. That's my philosophy.
Eleanor: Well, it's a good one. And I must say, Auntie Joyce, you are a real example to me and the other girls in the family. We talk about you sometime. I mean, about how you are just so cheerful all the time. Auntie Joyce, you are an example to us all.
Joyce: I learned it from my father. He was a very cheerful man. He used to say, "Joy is a choice, Joyce?"
Eleanor: Well, the apple doesn't fall very far from the tree, now does it!? Is that why your parents named you Joyce?
Joyce: No I don't think so. My mother chose my name, and she was a little on the gloomy side, herself. She chose the name "Joyce" but she wasn't the sort that chose "joy"!
Eleanor: Well, you certainly seem to have made your choice, Auntie Joyce!
Joyce: I'm glad you noticed, dear. We have to look after our own happiness ourselves.
Eleanor: You're right! And I'll do my best to follow your good example and be cheerful and upbeat about everything!
Joyce: But enough about me. How are you doing? Tell me what's new with you?
Eleanor: Well, it's Christmas time and the children are getting very excited about [To MUTE]

Joy a vivid emotion of pleasure and gladness And we have identified two types: Circumstantial and Volitional.

The joy of choice: and some people get good at choosing joy.

Someone might say that they are pretending, and it would be more sincere to just be gloomy.

But it's not generally just pretending for very long.

Acting happy tends to set up a chain reaction that actually does produce real joy. Real circumstantial joy.

Just look at these two! They have made each other joyful.

Vivid emotions of pleasure and gladness! No one is pretending!

Even though there was something very much like pretending at the beginning! But we like to call it Volitional Joy!

Oh look at the time! They'll be lining up outside the dining room waiting for lunch!

[Nurse re-enters]: Mrs. Glimpsin, it's time to make our way to the dining room.

Joyce: [To Eleanor] Thanks, dear. This is my niece Eleanor. [To Eleanor] Would you like to accompany me to lunch, Eleanor? They have the most delicious rice pudding! [All three exit]

Narrator: Now where were we? ...

1. Circumstantial joy: pleasure and gladness based on circumstances

The shepherds joy was to some great degree circumstantial.

Luke 2:20 ... the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. So was the joy of the wise men...

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

Not a bad thing. Not a fake thing just because it's based on circumstances.

And some people work hard at improving their circumstances:

More money, more things, more time to enjoy these things; better healthSome work at it very effectively!

Very happy! For a while at least!

2. Volitional joy: pleasure and gladness as a choice --- → Some people do manage to put off pessimism and gloom and just choose to be happy. And some people get very good at it.

Now then, is this all there is?

For many people, Yes. But it doesn't need to be. There is a third sort of joy to consider:

3. "Spiritual" joy: The joy of the Lord, the "fruit of the Spirit"

It's the specific pleasure and gladness that comes from direct contact with God Himself.

Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

It's the joy that comes from a relationship with God.

Psalms 16:5-9 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. **Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices ...**

It's the result of God's Spirit being personally involved in your life.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...

It's the result of believing and loving Christ.

1 Peter 1:8-9 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...**

And it's a major part of what a relationship to God is actually all about.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And it is a major source of strength regarding all the challenges of life

Nehemiah 8:10 ... the joy of the LORD is your strength.

NOW HERE IS SOMETHING INTERESTING!

This joy strengthens our grip on the other two sorts of joy as well!

a. It increases circumstantial joy: pleasure and gladness based on circumstances

Instructions given in order to increase our joy!

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that **your joy may be full.**

E.g.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that **your joy may be full.**

"Discipling" with joy as the target!

2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but **we work with you for your joy**, for you stand firm in your faith. [NOTE: Your trusting and obeying!]? ("1 Corinthians" with its practical instructions: e.g. unity, sexual purity)

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality.

The pursuit of joy is a shared challenge! Compare 2 Corinthians 1:24 to Philippians 2:1-2

Philippians 2:1-2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **complete my joy** by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

So "Spiritual" joy increases "circumstantial joy. The Holy Spirit directs us and guides us and strengthens us.

Our deliberate, whole-hearted obedience to God changes our circumstances and so intensifies our joy.

A problem with "obedience"? "It makes me feel like a dog!" ("Dogs are very happy!")

But more than a happy dog ... a happy human being, "a reasoning soul" More thoughtful than a happy dog!

b. It increases volitional joy: pleasure and gladness as a choice. And "Spiritual" joy increases this sort of joy, too!

By providing us with a rationale, **a reason for choosing to be joyful at all times.**

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

Personally knowing God greatly enhances our choosing because it actually supplies us with reasons for choosing to be joyful: reasons far more substantial than, say, choosing not to complain because no one will listen to you if you do!

Hebrews 12:6-7 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons.

Romans 8:28-29 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

SO HOW TO WE GET THIS "SPIRITUAL" JOY?

Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a **great joy** that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God...

Christ = Messiah = Anointed → God's unique prophet, priest and king

✓ Believe Jesus is the unique prophet of God → the authoritative source of absolute truth: "*build your house on the rock*"

✓ Believe Jesus is the unique priest of God → the one who can provide you with forgiveness/cleansing/permission to approach God

✓ Believe that Jesus is God's unique king → "to rule and defend us from all his and all our enemies"

It is through faith in Christ, through entering into and remaining in a relationship with God built on trusting and obeying Christ that we receive the Holy Spirit of Christ: and with Him comes his righteousness and peace and joy!

Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a **great joy** that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

It has been my privilege this morning to bring you what the angel brought the shepherds: "good news of a **great joy** that will be for all the people". Good news of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

So what will you do about that?

Romans 15:13 **May the God of hope fill you with all joy** and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Good news of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." It's the privilege of all Christ's followers. The obligation of all who come to see that Jesus was/is the Christ.

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And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a **great joy** that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Joy is "a vivid emotion of pleasure and gladness" ... And there are several sorts:

1. _____ joy

2. _____ joy

3. " _____ " joy:

Psalms 16:11 Psalms 16:5-9 Galatians 5:22 1 Peter 1:8-9

Romans 14:17 Nehemiah 8:10

a. It increases _____ joy

John 15:11 John 16:24 2 Corinthians 1:24 1 Corinthians 1:10

1 Corinthians 6:18 Philippians 2:1-2

b. It increases _____ joy

James 1:2-4 Hebrews 12:6-7 Romans 8:28-29

SO HOW TO WE GET THIS GREAT JOY?

Luke 2:10-11

1 John 5:1 Christ = Messiah = Anointed

✓ Believe Jesus is the unique _____ of God

✓ Believe Jesus is the unique _____ of God

✓ Believe that Jesus is God's unique _____

Romans 15:13