

Joy, a Fruit of the Spirit; Envy, a Habit of the Old Nature

GLDEN TEXT

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Joy, a fruit of the Spirit, does not depend on circumstances.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 16:20-24

20 - Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

21 - A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.

22 - So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

23 - In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

24 - Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explain about joy, as fruit of the Spirit, and envy, as work of the flesh.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To show** that God is the source of our joy;
- II. **To understand** that envy brings many evils to the envious person;
- III. **To know** that the believer has the joy of the Spirit despite the circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

In today's lesson we will study joy as fruit of the Spirit and envy as work of the flesh. We will see that the joy we feel, and that is the result of the fruit of the Spirit, does not depend on circumstances. Even facing difficulties and tribulations, we can have joy in our hearts. We will also study envy, a terrible feeling that is part of the Adamic nature. We will see that such a feeling does not please God and harms others.

I - FAITH TO CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN OF SACRIFICE

1. The joy of the Lord. Joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, is not related to circumstances and does not depend on material goods. In the text of John 16:20-24, Jesus states that he would give a permanent joy to his servants in such a way that nothing in this world would be able to take it away, not even death. The joy of the Spirit is a state of grace and spiritual well-being that results from fellowship with God. Whoever has the joy of the Spirit has no room for discouragement, melancholy and envy. God wants all his servants to be filled with joy, "for the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh. 8:10). Zechariah prophesied about the triumphant entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem, saying that such an act would bring joy (Zech. 9:9); Paul urged believers to be joyful at all times (Phil. 4:4) and the Psalmist encourages the people to serve God with joy (Psalm 100: 2). The greatest joy of the believer lies in the fact that his name has already been written in the Book of Life and that Jesus will return soon.

2. The source of our joy. God is the source of our joy and of all the gifts we have received (James 1:17). The best gift the Lord has ever given us was the coming of Jesus into this world and his sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins (John 3:16). Perhaps you are facing a difficult situation and, therefore, your heart is sad and sorry. But believe that the God who did not spare his own Son will give you all the things you need for your complete joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:32). The first-century

brothers, even suffering, rejoiced in God, and this joy gave them the strength to face all sorts of persecution. Paul and Silas, after being beaten and imprisoned, sang hymns of praise to God, showing that they were not sad or embittered by suffering (Acts 16:24, 25).

3. The blessing of joy. In the face of battles and conflicts of life, the believer in Jesus Christ does not lose peace or joy, because his joy comes from his communion with the Father. This communion is established through prayer, reading the Word and fasting. The believer lives by faith and not by circumstances. The prophet Habakkuk declared that even if there were no provision, he would rejoice in the Lord and exalt him (Hebrews 3:17,18). Belonging to the Lord and receiving his joy is a great privilege that leads us to exalt and worship the Lord at all times.

II - ENVY, GRIEF OVER THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS

1. Definition. According to the Wycliffe Bible Dictionary "the Greek word *phthonos*, which designates envy" is used throughout the New Testament. Envy is an (inner) intense pain, in the face of the success of others. Pain before what is good for others, therefore, Proverbs 14:30 says that "envy is rottenness to the bones." The envious person is bitter and emotionally sick because he does not have what another person has. Envy causes people to use selfish and evil attitudes to harm others. Envy is definitely a negative feeling that is part of the Adamic nature. This perverse feeling comes from Satan, because he tried to be like God (Is 14:12-20).

2. Envy, a fruit of the old nature. We learn from Galatians 5:21 that envy is the work of the flesh. A person dominated by the flesh does not spare efforts to degrade the good qualities existing in other people. Unfortunately, many believers still allow themselves to be mastered by this feeling and end up harming the Lord's Church and preventing some people from getting converted. May the Lord save our hearts from this perverse motivation!

3. The effects of envy. Envy will never bring good results, because it is harmful and destructive. This feeling leads people to commit all sorts of evil. Take Joseph's brothers as an example. It was out of envy that they sold him as a slave to the merchants (Gen 37:28). Some of the conflicts between Rachel and Leah also arose because of Rachel's envy (Gen. 30: 1). The envy that Saul began to feed against David led him to become mentally and spiritually sick (1 Sam. 18: 7,8). It also caused him to pursue and desire to kill David (1 Sam. 18:10,11). How many are not being

persecuted and even "killed" by envy? It separates the brothers, destroys the families and churches. In the New Testament, we see that the Son of God was arrested and taken to Pilate because of the envy of the priests (Mt 27:18). Paul warned Timothy and Titus about this evil feeling (1 Tim. 6:4; Envy is the work of the flesh and it only finds refuge in the hearts of those who are still dominated by the old nature and not by the Holy Spirit.

III - THE JOY OF THE SPIRIT IS TO BE ENJOYED

1. Joy in living. Do not be afraid to smile and enjoy the happiness that Christ offers us. Do not forget that Jesus came into the world to give us life abundantly, even in the face of tribulation (John 10:10). The Lord Jesus said that in the world we would have afflictions, but He exhorted us to be of good cheer (John 16:33). Jesus wants us to have victory over afflictions and sorrows.

2. Joy to serve. Serving God and others is a privilege, so we do it with joy (Ps 100:2). Many want to be served, but we must follow the example of the Master. He declared that he had not come into the world to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). Jesus served his disciples, the poor and needy. His joy and detachment to serve was the result of his fellowship with the Father. God Almighty also rejoiced in the works of the Son (Mt 3:16, 17).

3. Joy in giving. Have you given your tithes and offerings with joy? Contributing to the expansion of the Kingdom of God is a joy and a privilege. Paul taught the Corinthians not to give with sadness or under an obligation, but joyfully, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7). What pleases the Father is not how much we give, but the purpose of our heart (Lk 21:1-4). Our offerings and tithes are a way of praising and thanking God for all that He has done, and will do for us. Do not give your offerings in order to be seen by men or to bargain with God, seeking to be blessed in some way. Give God your best with joy, for you have already been blessed by Him. The Lord deserves our best.

CONCLUSION

May joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, be poured out into our hearts, even in the face of strife and tribulation, and let us never allow envy to have any room in our hearts. May we love God and our neighbors, rejoicing in their success!