

## **“The 4:8 Principle”**

June 26-27, 2010

### **Promises of God**

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (Jesus, John 10:10)*

*“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (Jesus, John 15:11)*

A Christian without joy is a contradiction.

JOY is an outward sign of inward faith in the promises of God.

*“...Christ has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (Apostle Peter, 1 Peter 1:4)*

### **Connecting with JOY**

#### 1. Renew our mind.

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Apostle Paul, Romans 12:1-2)*

#### 2. Submit negativity to God's Promises in Christ.

*“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 10:5)*

#### 3. Replace stinkin' thinkin'.

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Apostle Paul, Philippians 4:4-8)*

**Morning Star Church**  
**Devotional Guide**  
***The 4:8 Principle, Discovering***  
**June 28 - July 2, 2010**

**Message synopsis:** Pastor Mike started a brand new series this week called *The 4:8 Principle*. 4:8 is actually Philippians 4:8 where Paul talks about the importance of setting our thoughts on things that feed joy into our lives so we can transform our lifestyle into a joy-filled life. Pastor Mike challenged us to begin to discover how God thinks and then *redirect* our thoughts to be consistently focused on the things that God thinks about. The natural result will be that God's joy will permeate our lives.

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV

**Day 1 Joy Promised**

Psalm 16:11; Psalm 30:11; Isaiah 12:1-6; Isaiah 35:8-10

1. Pastor Mike pointed out that it is God's Plan for His people to discover, experience, and maintain a life filled with joy. What does the psalmist suggest about *the place* where we experience this joy? Psalm 30 suggests that joy for the God-follower will become a garment; what does that look like?
2. Isaiah 12 suggests that joy is associated with praise of God, how deep is your fountain of joy? Isaiah 35 describes the famous *Highway of Holiness*; what did you discover about life on that highway?

**Day 2 Joy Is...**

John 15:1-11; Philippians 4:4

1. Look up in dictionaries, thesaurus, and reference materials the word JOY. Record your results here. Also, how often do you experience real joy?
2. The scriptures you read today seem to imply that joy is found in a relationship. Explain your thoughts on that.

**Day 3 Your Inner Tapes**

Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8

1. Research has indicated that the average person thinks about 50,000 thoughts a day. And psychologists suggest that the inner, secret conversations (*inner tapes*) you have in your mind shape how we view ourselves and how we respond to life. So, give an estimate of how many of your 50,000 thoughts are *negative* about yourself or your life. What area of your thinking is most affected by negative thoughts? How would you take the Scriptures you read today and transform your thoughts?
2. Beginning today, you can increase your potential for joy by determining one circumstance that you would like to improve and the change in thinking that must precede it. Record that here.

#### Day 4 Joy Spotlight

Joshua 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 4:10-13, 15-16

1. In the theater when the production crew *spotlights* a certain performance on stage, they are intending to direct your attention to that area of the stage. Both Joshua and Paul suggest in your readings today that you **DWELL on** (*spotlight*) the things of God, as does Philippians 4:8. What do they suggest you dwell on? What does *dwell on* mean to you?
2. Here is a simple activity that will help you begin *focusing* your attention on positive responses. Answer these questions:
  - What are five things I am thankful for right now?
  - What are five of my strengths or positive traits?
  - What are five of my best achievements so far?
  - Who are five people who love me the most?
  - What five things am I looking forward to in the next seven days?

#### Day 5 God's Masterpiece

Ephesians 2:10; Psalm 8:3-5

1. We all have within our mind a picture of our **self-concept** which is a distinctive combination of our past recollections, our convictions, our life experiences, our feelings and our dreams. It is *acquired* as we progress through life. Summarize in one sentence how you view your self-concept currently.
2. Now rewrite your self-concept based on how God sees you in the Scriptures you read today. How is it different?

**Morning Star Church**  
**Small Group Discussion Guide**  
***The 4:8 Principle: Discovering***  
**June 28 - July 2, 2010**

**Group Icebreaker**

Share with your group any experiences from your life that resulted in a sense of joy. What made that experience so joyful?

*Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Philippians 4:8, the Message*

1. Ask your group to look up in dictionaries, thesaurus, etc. the word **JOY**. What definitions did they discover? Do you see any similarities? Are there certain circumstances that prohibit joy or define joy?
2. Pastor Mike talked about **joy** being the *outward experience of inward faith in the promises of God*. Ask your group members if any of them have had that experience before.
3. Anna Tripp shared her testimony in the worship service about trusting God's promises in spite of outward evidence that is contrary to her faith and that her joy remains full because Christ is the source she is trusting. Have your group read Jesus' words in John 15:5-11. Have your group share their thoughts on this.
4. Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 talk about redirecting your mind. How can a person redirect negative thoughts they might think about themselves?
5. Beginning today, you can increase your potential for joy by *determining one circumstance that you would like to improve and the change in thinking that must precede it*. Share this final exercise with your group members.

**Prayer Requests**