

Daily Devotional, March 24, 2020 A Cheerful Heart

Have the difficulties of this period of isolation caused your attitude to sink? Furthermore, have these circumstances you're facing caused your faith to falter? No matter how much we love Jesus or how much we try to walk in His peace, life's adversities can make it hard to stay positive. When circumstances are difficult, fears overwhelm, hearts are broken or anger is bubbling just below the surface, our thoughts turn negative, and soon, our attitudes as well. The next thing to head south is our faith. We become disconnected from God, and we lose sight of how to reconnect.

Why does this happen? Why do we let the hardships of life weigh down our hearts and minds to the point that we get irritable, depressed and lose confidence in our faith?

I guess the main reason is simply that we're human. God gave us the free will to choose how we think, act and feel and sometimes we use these faculties in ways that are not pleasing to Christ. As a result, negative thoughts and emotions can easily get the better of us. We carelessly let the enemy steal our peace. We let others break our hearts and destroy our self-esteem. We let life chip away at our joy and our lack of faith pulls us deeper into darkness.

Proverbs 17:22 (NIV) tells us, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

What does it mean to have a cheerful heart? Whatever it is, it sounds like it is something desirable, something that can even benefit us physically, doesn't it?

Even the wisdom of this age recognizes that our attitude affects our physical health. I have personally witnessed a physician tell a patient's family that without the will to live, the physical treatment offered by the medical staff would be insufficient to keep the patient alive.

Now, we can sing the praises of having PMA (positive mental attitude). All the great sales gurus like Zig Ziglar, and W. Clement Stone chant that mantra. But that is not the focus of a "cheerful heart" in Proverbs. God does not just want people to *feel good about themselves*. Without a right source for *feeling good*, positive attitude alone is deficient, if not utterly hollow.

In Proverbs the heart that is *cheerful* is a heart that knows God and God's will, is living in obedience to it, and willingly expresses praise and devotion to God.

Those who despise God's wisdom and who "delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil" (Proverbs 2:14) can never have the *cheerful heart* that God desires for us. All the positive mental attitude in the world, beneficial though it might be, cannot take the place of a godly believer, who loves God, loves to learn God's will, loves to put it into practice, loves to teach it to others, and loves to focus on eternal life in the presence of God. Truly, these people have the *cheerful heart* that God wants us to have.

No matter what you're facing today, a total attitude, heart and mind transformation can happen, if you invite God's Holy Spirit to begin a work of transformation in you.

Prayer: Oh Lord, at times my heart is overwhelmed. I become frustrated and it is difficult to be cheerful. Lord, I fix my eyes on you for you have promised you will never leave me nor forsake me. You will bless me with the desires of my heart, as I keep my focus on you. Thank you for your unmerited grace and favor upon my life and for your peace that passes all understanding. Thank you for your blessings upon my life daily. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.