THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS by Jerry Bridges

**Chapter Seventeen– “The Joy of Holiness” -Romans 14:17**

**“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”**

**(Romans 14:17NIV)**

*“God intends the Christian life to be a life of joy—not drudgery. The idea that holiness is associated with a* dour*(gloomy) disposition is a caricature of the worst sort. In fact, just the opposite is true. Only those who walk in holiness experience true joy” (pg.123)*

**T** he question that we must ask ourselves is this, “In what way does holiness produce joy?”

**H** oly living produces joy when our entire lives are dependent upon and in ***fellowship with God***.

**E** very day our lives should be filled with joy because of God’s presence with us and in us.

**J** oy, true joy comes only from God, and He produces this joy in us as we daily abide in Him.

**O** ur lives can either be filled with *the joy of His presence* as David penned in Psalm 16:11 or

**Y** earning for *joy to be restored* as David penned in Psalm 51:12 due to his grievous sins against the Lord and others. David pursued “joy” (adultery and murder) on his terms and the result was disobedience, despair, death and destruction to his family. (2 Sam.12-18; 1 Kings 2) (pg.124)

**O** ur love for Christ and His love for us are deeply connected to our obedience to Him. This is

**F** oundational for us to grasp and hold onto as we pursue holiness as a way of life. (Jn.15:10-11)

**H** old on to the fact that our Lord’s obedience to His Father was the basis of His joy in John 15.

**L** ike Jesus, we too who are obedient to His commands will experience the same joy. Joy results

**I** n obedience. But a life lived in disobedience will clearly be devoid of any joy or hope. (pg.125)

**N** ow in addition to the joy of fellowship with our Holy God, a holy life also produces the joy of

**E** ternal and ***anticipated reward.*** In Heb. 12:1-2 we see that Jesus endured much suffering

**S** o that He would not only experience the joy of doing His Father’s will but would experience

**S** olace in anticipating the joy of His reward-seated on the throne of heaven in fullness of glory!

We too can look forward to entering into the joy of the Lord as we walk in holiness (faithful obedience that is motivated out of our love for Him and His love for us) to the end of our days! (pg.124-125)

Jerry Bridges says, ***“Joy not only results from a holy life, but there is also a sense in which joy helps produce a holy life.”*** (pg.125)

Jerry continues…But to experience this joy, we must make some choices…

-***We must choose*** to forsake sin…because it grieves the heart of God

-***We must choose*** to count on the fact that we are dead to sin, freed from its control over us-We can now say NO to sin!!

-***We must choose*** to accept our responsibility to discipline our lives for obedience. (pg.125)

Jerry concludes our study in his book “The Pursuit of Holiness” by encouraging us with some Biblical help and hope that will harness us to God’s Word in our pursuit of holiness:

1) He has delivered us from the reign of sin (Romans 6)

2) He has given us God the Holy Spirit who lives within us (Eph.1:13-14; Romans 8)

3) He has revealed His will for holy living in His Word (Eph.5; 1 Thess. 4 & 5; 1 Pet. 4)

4) He works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose (Phil. 2:12-13)

5) He has sent pastors and teachers to exhort and encourage us in the path of holiness (Eph.4)

6) He answers our prayers when we cry to Him for strength against temptation (1 Corin. 10:13; Hebrews 2:14-18)

Jerry says, ***Truly the choice is ours.***

Ladies, what will you choose? Will you accept your responsibility and discipline yourself to live in habitual obedience to the will of God? Will you persevere in the face of frequent failure, resolving to never give up? Will you decide that personal holiness is worth the price of saying no to your body’s demands to indulge its appetites?

God has clearly said in 1 Peter 1:15-16 “Be holy, because I am holy.” Surely He has not commanded us to be holy without providing the means to be holy. The privilege of being holy is yours, and the decision and responsibility to be holy is yours. If you make that decision, (by God’s enabling grace) you will experience the fullness of joy which Christ has promised to those who walk in obedience to Him.” (page 126)

Pressing onward and looking upward,

Christyn