

(Philippians 4:1-4, NIV84)

Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

June 27

The Believer's Zest for Life

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord! Philippians 3:1

"Ho-hum! Another day at the same old grind!" How often haven't we greeted the dawn of a new day with a listless yawn and a depressing sense of boredom? And then how often haven't we reached for our robe as though we were about to don a funeral garment?

Admittedly, there are days when we will feel like that. But this attitude of "ho-hum" is not God's will for us. The apostle Paul was constantly encouraging the early Christians to rejoice! In fact, a modern paraphrase of the above Scripture passage would read: "Always be cheerful in the Lord. I never get tired of saying this, because I know it's good for your souls." Only a few verses later he comes back to this recurring theme: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice!"

The believer in Jesus Christ is to develop and exhibit a zest for life. Knowing that each new day is a day of divine grace, he is to sweep away the cobwebs of "ho-hum" and to breathe deeply and joyfully of the clean, refreshing air of God's abundant love and mercy. Then, in the words of Martin Luther, he is to "go joyfully" to his daily task. Do we do that?

Catherine Winkworth, the famous English poetess of the 19th century, knew the true and abiding joys of the Christian life. It is she who translated these jubilant lines:

Oh, rejoice, ye Christians loudly,
For our JOY hath now begun,
Wondrous things our God hath done.
Tell abroad His goodness proudly,
Who our race hath honored thus
That He deigns to dwell with us:

Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ hath done away with sadness.
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of grace is shining!

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)