



Calvary Alliance of Churches and Ministries

Greetings Fellow Leaders!

Many ministry leaders struggle with maintaining real happiness. Most find joy from their accomplishments, but that joy is short-lived as we move on to the next challenge or goal. I really believe that this struggle for genuine contentment is behind most ministry failures, morally and personally. This explains why many ministers are experiencing great success outwardly, yet behind the scenes they are depressed, battling with self-esteem, struggling in their marriage, or even living a secret and ungodly life. **God's will is for our joy to be lasting and steady.** Isaiah promised that God would replace "heavy spirits" with "garments of joy". He also told us that God would give us "praise instead of despair" (Isaiah 61:1-3). I began in ministry at age 17 and I have come to adopt these 3 practices in my personal life after 35 years of ministry:

1. **Recognize Your Need For Christ!** "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). God blesses those who realize their desperate need for daily relationship with Christ. How's your personal prayer life? And, I'm not talking about the time you spend in message preparation! **The key to maintaining joy is in a fervent and passionate pursuit of the Lord.** The word "blessed" means "enviably happy". When we pursue the Lord in prayer and personal study daily, it is a consistent confession of our dependence on Christ. If you realize that your daily joy depends on daily prayer, then you become more desperate for that relationship. I know that we are "the man of God" and all that...but we still need Jesus. By the way, Jesus promised the "kingdom of heaven" to the poor in spirit. Paul said that the kingdom of heaven is righteousness (God's approval daily), peace (God's unshakeable confidence), and JOY (God's own joy) in Romans 14:17.
2. **Cry Out For Help!** "Blessed are they that mourn" (Matthew 5:4). Don't be afraid to confess to God your areas of failure. **Be honest before God about that secret thing** where you have been a yo-yoing, up and down, repenting, and failing, trying and unable to change. Like Paul who prayed repeatedly about his thorn in the flesh, ask God to pull the root and plant a different seed, and deliver you. By the way, that's where the mourning takes place. When we cry out to God in honest confession, He delivers and sets us free. Believe in grace. Focus on God's special favor (2 Corinthians 1:2-3).
3. **Change Your Attitude!** Make today a new beginning in your personal prayer life and pursuit of God. Isaiah recommended we change our clothes, literally "put on garments of joy" (Isaiah 61:2-3). **Take off the ashes of yesterdays sorrow, past struggles, board meeting, or disappointment in the vision and put on the beauty of the Lord, which is His holiness!** As a man or woman of God you can daily put on joy for a garment and take off regrets, and personal assaults by putting on praise and taking off the sadness and despair.

When we put on joy, beauty, and praise in daily prayer depending on the Lord, we take off yesterday's bitterness, sorrow and unforgiveness. Then we become a brand-new tree, "the planting of the Lord, trees of righteousness". **This will work...guaranteed!** Oh yes, and don't be surprised when your private passion is blessed with public reward (Matthew 6:6).

Laborers Together,
Bishop Hilton