**Rejoicing in Your Children**

**11/11/14**

Rejoice (Definition): *to be glad; take delight*

Rejoice: Used 233 times in OT, 77 in NT (ESV)

Scripture References:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Php 4:4-7)

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. (Ps 90:14)

12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (Ro 12:12)

6 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you. (2 Co 7:16)

24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. (Prov. 23:24)

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (3 John 1:4)

What does it mean to rejoice in our children?

* Encouragement
* Benefit of the doubt
* Supportive
* Patience
* Love
* Celebration
* Focused Attention
* Involvement
* Compassion
* Trust
* Approval

What is the opposite of rejoicing?

* Discouragement
* Assume the worst
* Unsupportive
* Irritated
* Indifference
* Neglectful
* Absence
* Distant
* Criticism
* Doubt
* Blame
* **Encouragement**
  + Purposefully praising and lifting them up. Understanding their strengths and weaknesses and giving specific, positive words of reassurance… particularly when you want to be critical.
* **Benefit of the doubt**
  + Instead of thinking the worst out of fear and a desire that they “don’t fall into the same trap that you did”, assume the best and be there to pick them up when the fall.
* **Supportive**
  + Be their #1 fan and always offer caring, sympathetic words. Let them know that in light of all the bad things and people in this world, you are on their side, and always will be.
* ***Discouragement…*** *results in low self-worth, underachievement.*
* ***Assume the worst…*** *results in estrangement, antagonism.*
* ***Unsupportive…*** *results in lack of confidence, fearfulness.*
* **Patience**
  + Our kids change over time… let them grow and develop in their own way. Don’t press them into your mold. Consider how patient God is with you.
* **Love**
  + Above all else, let them know you love them. When faced with peer pressure and tough choices, they will know that they have “something” to lose… something that is special and worth living for.
* **Celebration**
  + Share in their successes… and their failures. Rejoice in their unique, God given abilities. Make them feel special, because they are!
* ***Irritated…*** *results in a sense of inadequacy, promotes anger.*
* ***Indifference…*** *results in low self-worth and seeking approval of others*
* ***Neglectful…*** *results in acting out for your attention.*
* **Focused Attention**
  + Kids don’t just want attention, they need it. If they don’t receive it from us, they will look for it elsewhere. How else are you going to truly know your child? Time… it’s our most priceless possession.
* **Involvement**
  + We must be involved. Without involvement, we aren’t truly a part of our kids lives. Find creative ways to do things together. Involvement allows us to model and mentor our children.
* **Compassion**
  + Live out your unconditional love for your kids. Don’t let anger or frustration rob you of the special role that God has put you in and the opportunities that arise to share His love with your child.
* ***Absence…*** *results in sense of abandonment and loneliness.*
* ***Distant…*** *results in a sense of rejection and lack of guidance/direction.*
* ***Criticism…*** *results in low self-esteem and disrespect for others.*
* **Trust**
  + Instilling a sense of trust goes a looooooong way. We need our kids to trust us with difficult questions and circumstances. We want them to come to us… instead of seeking the world’s advice. We need to trust that they have been taught well.
* **Approval**
  + There’s just something about a young person who knows they have their fathers approval. There is a confidence and a security about them. It’s critical that we express our approval (as well as our disapproval at times) in order that our kids know where they stand.
* ***Doubt…*** *results in hesitancy and leads to false assumptions.*
* ***Blame…*** *results in negative thoughts and lashing out at others.*

**So where does your joy come from?**

Does it come from your spouse or your children? Does it come from having a nice home or good job? Do you derive your joy from your health or possessions? What if you should lose them all? Would you be able to rejoice?

**What are you worth?**

The world ascribes value to what people own — salary, wealth, power, appearance and fame. As a Christian, you are worthy because Jesus is worthy. God’s love has made you important to Him. Without having to prove yourself, you are free to enjoy your life, no matter your circumstances.

**What is important to you?**

How you spend your time — reading the Bible, praying, watching TV, playing video games — reveals what is important to you. Reevaluate your actions, and then find behaviors that will cause you to grow closer to God. Growing closer to God is a source of joy.

**How big is your God?**

When good things happen, you may give God credit for it. When bad things happen, you may feel God has turned His back on you. In Psalms, read how David turned toward God amid crises and was rewarded with joy. Joy comes from knowing God, enjoying what God has done for you and believing that He constantly cares for you.

**Do you want your children to catch your joy?**

The best way to teach joy is to demonstrate it. If you are obsessed with keeping dirt out of the house or buying things to fill rooms, your children will notice. In the same way, if His joy permeates your life, they will learn to be joyful through your example.

Small Group Questions

1. What’s the number one thing that gets in your way of rejoicing with/in your children? Are you naturally more critical or forgiving?
2. How do you respond to your children when they make a mistake? (for instance, wreck the family car). How about when they succeed?
3. Do you celebrate your child’s uniqueness? Do you treat your daughter differently than your son? Discuss some of the ways you’ve learned to rejoice with/in them specific to their personality.
4. What is the foundation upon which we can rejoice in the midst of painful experiences? What does the Bible tell us? How do we practically live this out? How do we teach our kids to embrace this?
5. How encouraging or discouraging was your father when you were growing up? What affect did it have on you?
6. What’s the one thing that you do/would rejoice in the most regarding your children?