

SOP: Choose Joy (handout)

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Definition of joy: Websters: a state of well-being and contentment; a pleasurable or satisfying experience, and the emotion that it produces. Happiness is usually dependent on outside circumstances and our perception of them.

Definition of happiness:

An emotion in which one experiences feelings ranging from contentment and satisfaction to bliss and intense pleasure. It is the outward expression of elation; based on circumstances.

But How Do We Return To Joy:

- One of the first skills an infant begins to learn is how to return to joy.
- Realize you have not been left alone. He has come to you. He is the Comforter and the source of all comfort. (John 14:16-18, II Corinthians 1:3-7)
- Jesus promises to send us 'the Comforter'— learning to live a merged life with the Holy Spirit releases His response in the midst of our circumstances.
- Acknowledge the former ways you have coped with pain and the patterns you developed in response to suffering. (Hebrews 2:18—we are tempted more in suffering than by our appetites)
- The pleasure center in our brain becomes vulnerable—we settle for the 'passing pleasures of sin' instead of true joy.
- To abide means to remain with—even when put to the test. It is in abiding that His life begins to flow into our life. (John 15:1-11)
- Regularly practice checking in. Acknowledge the state of your heart and what negative emotions are preventing you from returning to joy. Ask the Holy Spirit what needs to be confessed/released.
- When people suffer—or needs are repeatedly neglected—they may experience depression and despair—and become unable to return to joy.

Joy Is Reflecting His Likeness in my Circumstances:

- **Psalm 119:14**
- **Psalm 16:8-11—(It is fully realized in His Presence)**
- **I have set the Lord continually before me;** because He is at my right hand, **I will not be shaken.** Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; **in Thy Presence is fulness of joy;** in Thy right hand there are **pleasures forever.**
- **Psalm 21:6**
- **Nehemiah 8:10**

- **John 15:9-11**