

THE LEADER'S JOY

(BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS FOR SPIRITUAL HEALTH)



HOW TO RISE ABOVE...

- LIVING IN THE PAST
- LIVING IN A HURRY
- LIVING IN ANXIETY

“Be anxious for nothing.” (Philippians 4:6)

Bill Kirk

“THE LEADER’S JOY”

1. Keep Your Walk Before Your Work

(So that what you do flows out of who you are)

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.”

(Luke 10: 41, 42)

Question: What was Martha’s problem?

Answer: Not that she was busy (we all are busy). Instead, she simply misplaced her priorities and became distracted from the place of prayer and devotion.

Question: Why so important? In the word you obtain God’s wisdom, but in prayer...

- ◆ You obtain God’s strength.
- ◆ You are working with God to determine the future.
- ◆ God moves us along into a deeper relationship with Him.
- ◆ We learn to reorient our lives.
- ◆ We expose ourselves to God’s divine presence so He can change us.
- ◆ We become sensitive to the “Divine Whispers” for direction.
- ◆ We exchange our weakness for God’s strength and our anxiety for God’s peace.

God Reminds Me Often

- ◆ If we learn to wrestle with God in secret we will never have to lower ourselves to wrestle with men in public.
- ◆ If we prostrate ourselves before the Lord we will never be prostrated before the enemy.

Too Busy?

“Like Jesus, we must go away from people so that we can be truly present when we are with people.” (Richard Foster)

“No man can do enough for others if he is always surrounded by others.” (Howard Hendricks)

“No one can be a public person without risk to his soul unless first he is a private person.” (Thomas A. Kempis)

“Hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil” (Karl Jung)

Never Forget This

- ◆ Even a professional chef can starve to death while preparing food for other people!

Let’s Pray This

“Lord, forgive me for the times I have sought my own schedule, instead of your plans for the day” and “Lord, help me to embrace your word before the opinions of anyone else today.”

2. Quit Living In The Past

(So you can reach your fullest potential)

“I focus on this one thing; forgetting the past and what lies behind and looking forward to what lies ahead.” (Philippians 3:13)

Fact: Many Christians crucify themselves between two thieves – the regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow.

Paul Said It Well

- ◆ He cannot live in the disappointments of yesterday.
- ◆ He cannot look back if he wants to move forward.

In Other Words

- ◆ I can waste my life by looking back, or I can invest my life by looking forward!

3. Release The People And Circumstances Outside Of Your Control

(So worry will not consume your time)

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:34)

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything...then you will experience God’s peace which exceeds anything we can understand.” (Philippians 4:6, 7)

God Is Clear and Simple:

- ◆ Today has all we can handle!
- ◆ We don’t need tomorrow’s grace today!
- ◆ Trying to live in the future complicates life today.
- ◆ It is impossible to deal with tomorrow’s problems right now.

Remember

- ◆ Worry is accepting responsibility that God never intended for me to carry!

4. Conquer The “Disease To Please”

(So you won’t be addicted to needing attention or acceptance from people).

“Am I trying to win the favor of men, or God? Do I seek to please men? If pleasing people is my goal, I cannot be a bond servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10)

“Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety.” (Proverbs 29:25)

“Let every person bear their own responsibility, then they will get the satisfaction of a job well done.” (Galatians 6:4)

10% of people you meet in life will not like you no matter what you do to please them.

So Here’s The Reality Check

1. God did not create you to meet everyone else’s need!
2. God does not expect you to make everybody happy!
3. God knows that you cannot fix those who want to be enabled!
4. God is OK with you not meeting everyone else’s expectations!

So Chill Out And...

1. Allow God to control you (instead of people).
2. Learn to say "no" (without feeling guilty).
3. Get God's agenda for your life (and not everybody else's)

Remember What Jesus Said At Life's End On Earth

"I have glorified you (Father) on the earth; I have finished the work which you have given me to do.." (John 17:4)

And if someone rejects you and becomes your enemy (adversarial),

(Remember these truths so you live free from intimidation and manipulation.)

"The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." (Exodus 14:14)

"My defense is of God, which saveth the upright in heart." (Psalm 7:10)

"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." (Psalm 37:7)

5. Allow For Margins In Your Life

(So you can avoid the snare of perfectionism)

"Find rest for your soul: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29, 30)

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30:15)

My soul waits thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." (Psalm 62:5)

Fact: In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus tells us that He is not a hard taskmaster (harsh and sharp) but gentle and meek (power under control).

In Other Words

1. God is easy to live with! (and)
2. God knows there are no perfect people! (and)
3. God knows we live in an imperfect world, (full of unplanned emergencies and inconveniences).
4. God knows that rain falls on the just and the unjust.

Just Remember:

A healthy Christian can deal with inconveniences without getting a bad attitude!

So Why Not...

- ◆ Plan for things to take a little longer than you think
- ◆ Plan for the traffic to be a little busy.
- ◆ Plan for the grocery store trip to take a little longer.
- ◆ Plan for the phone call to last more than two minutes of your time.
- ◆ Plan for the waitress not to deliver your lunch in five minutes.

In Other Words

- ◆ Add time to your tasks so that you can live with more peace and less stress (and not catastrophize normalities).

6. Cultivate A Grateful Spirit

(So you can experience the joy of contentment and giving)

“In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
(I Thessalonians 5:18)

“Be satisfied (content) with what you have.” (Hebrews 13:5)

“Do all things without complaining, grumbling or murmuring.” (Philippians 2:14)

Question: Why is an attitude of gratefulness so important?

Answer: Because it will free your mind to think on things that produce joy and peace (instead of turmoil).

Remember This

- ◆ A grateful person is content with what they have.
- ◆ A grateful person is outward and loves to give and bless other people.
- ◆ A grateful person creates an atmosphere that everyone can enjoy.
- ◆ A grateful person knows this truth: if I’m not content with what I have, I’ll not be content with what I want!
- ◆ A grateful person will help and give to many people because they know...
 1. God will send it to you if He can get it through you.
 2. Loving never empties the heart and giving never empties the purse.
 3. We shovel it out; God shovels it in and His shovel is bigger than our shovel.

7. Recognize That Everyone Faces Storms, Trials And Tests In Life.

(So you will not get sour and abandon your faith in the tough times.)

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” (I Peter 4:12)

“In the world you will have tribulation.” (John 16:33)

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”
(Romans 8:22)

Question: Why is it so important to believe in the sovereignty of God? (Romans 8:28, 29)

Answer: Because faith in God’s character and integrity in hard times will protect you from...

1. Yielding to self-pity
2. Developing a martyr’s complex
3. Fainting by the wayside

Question: What’s the good news for every believer who goes through the hard places?

Answer: That God’s grace will always be sufficient to carry us through. (II Corinthians 12:9)

Remember

- ◆ When you cannot trace God’s hand you can always trust His heart!

Why Not Memorize...

- ◆ “As for God His way is perfect.” (Psalm 18:30)
- ◆ “The steps of the righteous are ordered of the Lord.” (Psalm 37:23)
- ◆ “God will finish what He’s started in you.” (Philippians 1:6)
- ◆ “He makes all things beautiful in His time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

(Faith Overcomes Discouragement)

- ◆ Discouragement is a lie of the devil to blind you in the present of what God is going to do in the future!

8. Accept Your Giftings And the Way God Made You.

(So you can serve without comparing, competition or self-consciousness)

“Be honest in your evaluation of yourself, for as your body has many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body.” (Romans 12:3, 4)

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves among ourselves, for if we do, we are not wise.” (II Corinthians 10:12)

Question: Why are so many believers frustrated and unhappy in their local church ministry?

Answer: #1 Because their spiritual responsibility doesn’t match up to their spiritual gifting or
#2 They are wishing they were like somebody else who is different than them.

Self-Consciousness Defined Is...

- ◆ The feeling of being observed, yet not approved. The Cure?
- ◆ Be yourself and realize, if someone rejects you, they are rejecting what God has created, not what you have created!

“A relaxed attitude lengthens your life; jealousy rots it away.” (Proverbs 14:30)

9. Choose The Power Of Forgiveness

(So you can live free of offence, anger, bitterness and resentment.)

“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.” (Proverbs 19:11)

“Forgive one another even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

“Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”
(Hebrews 12:15)

Question: What is forgiveness?

Answer: The cancellation of a debt as if it never existed!

Question: How is it possible?

Answer: Understanding that God (in Christ) has forgiven us of every sin (when we could not forgive ourselves.)

Question: Why so important?

Answer: Because unforgiveness is the umbilical cord that keeps you tied to the past. When you forgive, you cut that cord and begin to live free from the control of what someone else has done to you.

Never Forget...

1. Unforgiveness is the poison we drink while we wait for the other person to die!
2. Your progress is determined by what you're willing to ignore.
3. Bitterness is failure to see suffering from God's point of view.
4. Resentment is allowing someone you despise to live rent-free in the house of your mind.
5. A bad attitude makes a person a prisoner of their own experience (because if there is someone you have not forgiven, they own you).
6. An enemy in the heart is worse than ten thousand in the field.
7. If you're in pursuit of vengeance, be sure to dig two graves.

And Never, Never Forget This

◆ The only part of me that can be offended is that part of me which has not died.

"A fool is quick tempered, but a wise person stays calm when insulted." (Proverbs 12:16 NLT)

10. Embrace the Fear Of The Lord

(So sin will not rob you of a clear conscience)

"Blessed is the man that fears the Lord that delights in His commandments."
(Psalm 112:1)

"Those who fear the Lord are secure; He will be a place of refuge for their children."
(Proverbs 14:26)

"Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth." (Joshua 24:14)

"By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life." (Proverbs 22:4)

"By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." (Proverbs 16:6)

Question: What is the fear of the Lord?

Answer: It is my response to the holiness of God (a steadfast disposition that takes God extremely serious in every area of my life).

Question: Why so important?

Answer: Because without the fear of God we become a law unto ourselves (and desensitize our heart to sin that will destroy us).

The Fear Of The Lord Will Help Us To...

1. Maintain a pure thought life (Philippians 4:8)
2. Make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14)
3. Guard our eyes from pollution (Job 31:1)
4. Honor authority (Romans 13:2)
5. Reject all gossip and slander (Proverbs 16:28)
6. Always tell the truth (Ephesians 4:25)

So Lord Help Me Remember That...

1. Every evil thought is sin in its embryo stage.

2. Sin that is destroyed in our minds will not become a part of our history.
3. My life will always go in the direction of my most dominant thoughts.
4. The longer I resist the calling voice of God, the harder it becomes to hear that voice again.
5. The longer I stay where I do not belong, the harder it becomes to exit that place.
6. All temptation is a lie, promising something that it cannot deliver.
7. You cannot change what you do not confront.

“He that covers his sin cannot prosper, but whoever confesses and forsaketh sin shall have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

Fact:

- ◆ Disobedience weakens your confidence in God because you cannot expect God to respect your prayers when you have ignored His instructions.

11. Increase Your Wisdom Through Humility

(So you can grow beyond previous limitations)

“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches (divine provision because of obedience), honor (the favor of God and man because of the power of a good name), and life.” (which is inward peace and joy because of the power of a clear conscience) (Proverbs 22:4)

“I will dwell with those who are humble and contrite in spirit.” (Isaiah 57:15)

“With the lowly (humble) is wisdom.” (Proverbs 11:2)

“Wisdom that is from above is easy to be entreated.” (James 3:17) which means:

- ◆ Wisdom “yields” and takes the high road of humility.
- ◆ Wisdom says “I don’t have all the answers; I can learn something from others.”
- ◆ Wisdom (through humility) is flat out teachable (willing to learn).

Question: What is the #1 reason why some people never grow and advance beyond their present effectiveness?

Answer: They are impossible to correct!

Question: What is the #1 reason why some people grow and soar and bear much fruit?

Answer: They are easy to correct (and when corrected)...

- ◆ They do not sulk!
- ◆ They do not blame!
- ◆ They do not withdraw!
- ◆ They do not become defensive!
- ◆ They do not become adversarial and defend their actions!

Remember These Two Truths:

1. Humility turns an offence into a gift! (because it allows you to grow, take up your cross and become like Jesus and bear more fruit) and...
2. When you confess, “I want more wisdom”, you are saying, “Correct me when I am wrong.” (which will give you access to wise people who will invest and protect you because of your transparency, humility and future potential).

12. Live A Disciplined Life

(So you can live under the control of the Holy Spirit)

"I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should, otherwise after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified." (I Corinthians 9:27)

"Other vineyards have I kept, but my own vineyard have I not kept." (Song of Solomon 1:6)

"He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." (Proverbs 25:28)

Question: What is discipline?

Answer: It is the choice we make to place ourselves before God so He can transform us.

Question: Why is it so important?

Answer: Because we cannot change ourselves (by our own will) so discipline puts us on the path where change can occur.

- ◆ Discipline gives God opportunity to transform the ingrained habit patterns of our lives.
- ◆ Discipline forces us to "**narrow our interests**" so that God can work more fully.
- ◆ Discipline aligns us with God so that He can liberate us from the slavery of self-interest, self-preoccupation and self promotion.
- ◆ Discipline doesn't change us; it simply gives God the tools he needs to reconstruct us.
- ◆ Discipline brings order (both inwardly and outwardly) so that God can work unhindered.

"God is not a God of confusion, but a God of peace and order." (I Corinthians 14:33)

(Discipline "Inventory" is OK)

- ◆ Am I consistent in the secret place with God?
- ◆ Do I leave things go until the last minute?
- ◆ Are things organized (or cluttered) at home, in the garage, at the office, etc?
- ◆ Do I pay my bills on time?
- ◆ Do I spend money on frivolous things?
- ◆ Do I return borrowed items?
- ◆ Do I keep my promises?
- ◆ Do I eat too much junk food or exercise too little?
- ◆ Do I talk too much?
- ◆ Do I waste endless hours online or in front of the TV?

Fact: You can't wait two weeks to milk the cow and then run out and milk like crazy!!!

Conclusion

Question: How do we respond when God blesses our obedience to His truth?

Answer: Like Paul in Ephesians 3:21, we give all glory to God (so that humility can continue to attract God's favor upon our lives.)

***"TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES,
WORLD WITHOUT END."*** (Ephesians 3:21)

Amen!
Bill Kirk