

# Seeking Joy in Loving Others

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2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-21

*"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...." (John 7:37-38)*

## **Main Idea:**

**Unless You Are Seeking the Fullest Greatest Joy,  
You Cannot Rightly Please God or Serve People**

*"The first and great and primary business to which I ought to attend everyday is to have my soul happy in the Lord, the first thing to be concerned about is not how much I might serve the Lord, how much I might glorify the Lord, but how much I might get my soul into a happy state in the Lord, how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might seek in other ways to behave myself as becomes a child of God in this world, and yet not being happy in the Lord it is all in vain." —George Muller*

*Jeremiah 9:24, "I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord."*

## **What Made the Macedonian Generosity Such a Genuine Act of Love?**

### **1.) Their Generosity and Love Was a Work of Divine Grace (V. 1)**

Read Verse 1

Read 2 Corinthians 8:16-17

### **2.) The Experience of God's Grace Filled Them With Joy (V. 2)**

Read Verse 2

*"Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17-18*

### **3.) Their Joy in God's Grace Overflowed in Generosity To Serve Others in Love. (V. 3-4)**

Read Verses 3-4

*Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?"*

*"They found their pleasure in channeling the grace of God through their poverty to the poverty in Jerusalem... Love is the overflow of joy-in God! It is not duty for duty's sake or right for right's sake. It is not resolute abandoning of one's own good with a view solely to the good of the other person. It is first a deeply satisfying experience of sharing that grace with another person. When poverty-stricken Macedonians beg Paul for the privilege of giving money to other poor saints, we may assume that this is not just what they ought to do or have to do. It is their joy- an extension of their joy in God. To be sure, they are denying themselves whatever pleasures or comforts they could have from the money they give away, but the joy of extending God's grace to others is far better reward than anything money can buy." —John Piper*

*2 Corinthians 9:6-7, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."*

*1 Corinthians 13:3, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing."*

*"There is no conflict between the gratification of desire and the enhancement of man's pleasure, on the one hand, and fulfillment of God's command on the other... The tension that often exists within us between a sense of duty and wholehearted spontaneity is a tension that arises from sin and a disobedient will. No such tension would have invaded the heart of unfallen man. And the operations of saving grace are directed to the end of removing the tension so that there may be, as there was with man at the beginning, the perfect complementation of duty and pleasure, of commandment and love." —John Murray*

*"The message that needs to be shouted from the houses of high finance is this: Secular man, you are not nearly hedonistic enough...Quit being satisfied with the little 5 percent yields of pleasure that get eaten up by the moths of inflation and the rust of death. Invest in the blue-chip, high-yield, divinely insured security of heaven."— John Piper*

*"There are mountain climbers who have spent sleepless nights on the faces of cliffs, have lost fingers and toes in subzero temperatures, and have gone through horrible misery to reach a peak. They say it is "harsh and dreadful." But if you ask them why they do it, the answer will come back in various forms: there is an exhilaration in the soul that feels so good it is worth all the pain. If this is how it is with mountain climbing, cannot the same be true of love? Is it not rather an indictment of our own worldliness that we are more inclined to sense exhilaration at mountain climbing than at conquering the precipices of un-love in our own lives and in society? Yes, love is often a "harsh and dreadful" thing, but I do not see how a person who cherishes what is good and admires Jesus can help but feel a sense of joyful exhilaration when (by grace) he is able to love another person."—John Piper*

*Romans 12:9-10, "Let love be without hypocrisy...Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love...."*

*"Have you realized most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself." —Martin Lloyd-Jones*

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God" Psalm 43:5*