

## **Bring Happiness and Joy to Your World**

**Dr. Catherine Hart Weber**

But the Godly are happy; they rejoice before God and are overcome with joy.  
Psalm 68:3 NET

We are created to thrive in positive character traits and Spirit emotions such as love, peace, gratitude and joy. The Bible promises us the gift through the Holy Spirit living in us.

In my book *Flourish: Discover Vibrant Living* I invite you to cultivate conditions for positive emotions and being a 'joy spreader'.

The causes and triggers of short-term happiness may differ, but research is verifying that what sustains *long-term happiness* - joy, wellbeing, contentment – whatever you choose to call it - seems to be universal to all cultures. God created us this way.

Research suggests that about 40% of your own level of happiness is entirely within your own control - despite circumstances and our natural disposition. Life will have challenges and difficulties. There is a time and season for everything. It doesn't have to be all good, all smiles, all the time. Life is messy and difficult.

However the Bible and science reassure us that there are qualities, skills and traits you can learn to keep growing and thriving in the spirit of joy, happiness and gladness.

### **1. Love God and practice your faith**

Those who practice their faith daily with an active Spirit filled life, will have stronger immune systems, be more resilient in difficult times, feel more hopeful and even live longer. Grow and develop into the best person God created you to be.

A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump;  
a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree. Proverbs 11:28 MSG

Live wholehearted before God. Live in awe and wonder. Be mindful of the present moment, of God's amazing love and goodness to you.

*"You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand"*  
(Psalm 16:11 NLT).

Share your heart honestly with God. Listen for His voice and loving heart towards you. Meditate on the Word. Daily consider how you can apply these to your life.

### **2. Love People and stay connected**

In the end, love is all that really matters. The happiest people have the strongest, healthiest relationship connections and serve others. They are surrounded with a close network of meaningful relationships that they nurture regularly.

Daily connect with someone close to you. Care for others.

Who do you do life with? Who are your top 5 connections? Who needs your love?

### **3. Be a grateful joy spreader**

Gratitude leads to psychological and physical well-being and a joy that spreads like the flu. Grateful people have more positive emotion, report higher life satisfaction and less depression and stress.

Even your gestures of goodness, kindness and happiness will have a great impact. *Smile. Laugh. Pray. Give a hug. Give from the heart. Give back. Flow forward. Listen. Share a kind word. Say thank you. Lend a helping hand. Be a friend. Offer hospitality.*

We need the beauty of goodness and joy to protest and balance against the brokenness and suffering in the world.

Throughout the day, think of what you can be grateful for. Actually feel appreciation in your heart. Before going to bed at night, write down at least three things you were grateful for that day. What are you most grateful for today?

### **4. Don't worry, think great thoughts**

What are the joy busters in your life? Often it is stress, fear and worry. If you want to keep daily joy, don't believe everything you think or dwell on or what you can't control. Worry for about 10 minutes, then give it to God in prayer, and let it go. Focus on what you can control and what you are grateful for. Think great thoughts and about making good choices in the here and now.

### **5. Boost your natural daily joy**

Live fully alive in each moment – recognizing God's blessings. Cultivate positive emotions of the Holy Spirit. Be open to receive divine joy. Reach out and make a difference by giving, serving, volunteering. Listen to enjoyable music. Sing. Eat well. Exercise. Go for a walk outside. Get 10 minutes of sunlight. Spend some time in the beauty of nature. Meditate. Breathe deeply. Laugh a lot. Journal. Forgive – yourself and others. Let God love you. Do something creative. Engage in meaningful work. Be enthusiastic about something. Spend time with a 'joy spreader'. Reminisce on good memories. Discover your strengths – and use them daily. Give a card and small gift to someone. Spend time with a pet. Buy some fresh flowers.

Okay, have a little dark chocolate too.