



**How To Live a
Joyful Life
By Beth Jones**



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Publisher: Refreshing Waters Ministries, P. O. Box 452, Butler, MO 64730

NOTE: While I have taken some literary liberties for the sake of story-telling in this ebook, the heart of the stories remains God’s Biblical truth. Yes, I do know what the Bible says in Revelation 22:18 about taking away from or adding to the scriptures, and that is not what I’m doing here. God knows my heart. ☺

Beth Jones
Tablet Of My Heart
Website: <http://www.bethjones.net>
Email: elizabethdjones@gmail.com



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Dedication

Dedicated to my Deliverer, Jesus. Words are not enough to thank You. I love you.

Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

~ John 20: 17

Chapter 1: Seek Jesus in Prayer: Holding On To A Lifeline

"Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ' I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" ~ John 20: 17

When you hear the word "joy," what comes to mind? The laughter of your children? Hearing your husband's corny jokes? Enjoying a hot coffee at Starbucks with a friend? Writing or speaking, sharing the messages God has burning in your heart? Knowing you are using your gifts and walking in your calling from God? Shopping? Laying on a beach, listening to the ocean waves and smelling the salt air? Finishing a 5K race for the first time in your life? Losing 20 pounds? Looking into your baby's eyes for the first time?

Joy can mean all these things, and more. It can also mean holding tightly to your spouse's hand when you find out your sick child is going to be okay, after all. It can mean laughter through tears at the funeral, like we experienced this year with loved ones at the untimely deaths of my husband Ray's and my dear friends Mike Fools and Jim Maher. It can mean that despite the fact that you don't see the evidence of your faith, you still believe and trust God.

We can try to achieve joy in a lot of different ways. Shopping. Eating. Achieving goals. Exercising. Making money. Getting our dream home or dream car. Traveling. Buying more stuff.

We might look for love in all the wrong places by having sex with someone before we're married, through emotional or physical affairs, or by fantasizing about someone who isn't our spouse. We might try to fill that empty, black hole inside of us with drugs or alcohol.

We can even try religion and good works to numb the pain that is deep inside of us - working in a soup kitchen, ringing a bell at Christmas time, all to try to find what is missing in our lives.

Yet the only true joy is found in a relationship with our creator God. Knowing Jesus Christ is our joy. It is the only thing that truly fulfills us, the only thing that truly matters, and the only thing that lasts.



Most people in town knew who she was, and avoided her. They were uncomfortable around her. She was aware of the whispers and the stares when she went, alone, to the market each week. Their response angered her. They hadn't walked in her shoes. They didn't know what she'd been through all her life, what had happened to her...yet deep down inside, she knew...she needed help. Serious help.

She needed inner healing. She needed deliverance. Everyone could see it in her eyes...she was tormented inside by demons, seven of them.

One day she'd heard in town about that new man that everyone was talking about. Jesus. Some claimed he was the Messiah, the Son of God. The Pharisees and other religious people said he was the devil, a liar, a blasphemer. One thing was for sure: wherever he went, exciting things happened. Miracles. Healings. Hungry people were fed. Demons were cast out. She wondered with faint hope if he could help her...she'd been to family, friends, doctors, priests...no one had been able to help her.

Many rejected her. Uncomfortable, afraid of her, they didn't want to even be around her, which made her feel rejected and unloved. No man would have her as a wife, even though she was very beautiful. She was damaged goods.

Would this Jesus be able to set her free? Was there any hope for even her? She knew it was a risk to try to get near him. He was always surrounded by throngs of people, pushing, shoving, trying to touch him to be healed. If she tried, they might try to strike her as people sometimes did, calling her a devil. His disciples were practically his bodyguards – “Not too close to the Rabbi!”

She remembered the day they had tried to tell this to the children and Jesus had rebuked them. “Let the little children come to me,” he scolded them. “For of such is the Kingdom of God!”

The children then ran to him, laughing, crawling in his lap, hugging him. Children were drawn like a magnet to him...**he was safe and trustworthy.** So many people were intrigued by him. He was good, kind, truthful, wise.

She pulled her dark purple scarf over her head, hoping no one would recognize her, and she made her way determinedly through the crowd, holding her breath, praying fervently. If he couldn't help her, this Jesus, no one could. Then suddenly it was as if the Red Sea were parting, making a way for her miracle.

She was standing right in front of him. She'd never been this close to him. Her heart pounded with terror, and she began to shake violently. The demons inside of her were protesting, screaming, threatening her for her to run away. They would fight her freedom. They knew who he was. **A battle now raged inside of her for her very soul.**

She had never seen anyone's face like his – so full of *zoe* life, so full of joy, and – yes, so full of *love*. **Such endless, agape love.** His compassionate, yet fierce eyes pierced her soul and were a deep well of wisdom and utter revelation. **Somehow she knew that he knew her,** even though she'd never met him before.

His eyes. Oh, his eyes. Their depths of love. She could stare into them forever and yet, it almost hurt to look into eyes with that much love ~ so unflinching, so forgiving, so without reproach. She felt frightened, but she knew that he was her only chance to be truly free...She began to stammer, “Rabbi, please pardon me, but I – I – I need your help....”

“Mary,” he said tenderly and yet with great authority. How did he know her name? Maybe he'd heard people talking about her in town. Then he did the extraordinary. He

reached out his hand to touch her, and then he commanded the demons, “Go!” With one word of his, the demons had no choice. She felt their rage, but their absolute submission to his authority.

Terrified that they would kill her as they had often threatened to do, **she grabbed ahold of his hand as if it were a lifeline**, feeling them leaving her body and mind at once by supernatural force, and she collapsed at his feet, sobbing.

For the first time in her life **she was free**. Totally, beautifully free. They had walked with her a long time, and now she knew they were gone. How could she ever repay him? She clung to his feet, crying, worshipping, and praising him. **She would follow him the rest of her life. She would never let him go.**



Many of you are familiar with Mary Magdalene or Mary Magdala in John 20, Mark 16, and Matthew 28. She’s one of my favorite characters, because I closely identify with her. Mary was very grateful for what Jesus had done for her and all she wanted to do was be with him. She couldn’t get enough of his presence!

She was a woman out of whom Jesus had cast seven demonic spirits (Luke 8:2, Mark 16:9), and she traveled with Jesus and his disciples. She, a woman, was the first person to see him after his resurrection, and he commissioned her as the first Christian evangelist to go and tell the other disciples about his resurrection. (John 20) She is known as the woman who clung to Jesus at the grave after he was resurrected, and didn’t want to let go of him...Mary was faithful until the end! That is how I want to be, too ~ don’t you? ☺

We don’t know what Mary Magdala did for a living, but it appears that she may have been one of the women who provided for Jesus and his disciples out of their wealth, funding the ministry. Maybe she was a woman who had her own home business, an entrepreneur!

“Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s business manager, Susanna, and many others who were contributing their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples. (Luke 8: 1-3)

Many people think Mary Magdala was a prostitute or a whore, and they often confuse her with Mary of Bethany or the sinful woman who kissed and poured perfume on Jesus’ feet, but the Bible does not say this. What we do know is that **she was oppressed by seven demons, and Jesus set her free.**

Joy is the knowledge that Jesus has saved and delivered us, and set us free.

Take Action step: Meditate on what Jesus has done for you today. Thank him!



Journaling Questions

1. Have you ever felt alone and ostracized like Mary Magdala?
2. What are some of the things Jesus has set you free from?
3. What are some areas in your life now that you desire for Jesus to set you free from struggles with your weight, financial problems, health issues, worry, depression, anger, envy, jealousy, pride, marriage struggles, business or ministry problems?
4. Are you clinging to God like a lifeline – or to other things or other people? What is something that you may need to let go of today in order to draw closer to God?
5. Have you gone and done what Jesus told you to do, like He did Mary Magdala at the tomb? What's holding you back – doubt, fear, pride, uncertainty you heard right?
6. Mary Magdala didn't recognize Jesus at first when He appeared to her in the garden. She thought He was the gardener. Have you ever had trouble seeing or recognizing God – or His work – in your life? Describe what happened. What opened your eyes?

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Chapter 2: Being Sifted as Wheat With Fear: Renew Your Mind with the Word of God

“But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus,
“Don't be afraid. Just have faith.” ~ Luke 8:50

Fear is a funny thing. It can have different faces, but its motive is the same: to hold you back from greatness. It will steal the joy, the passion, and the purpose that God has for your life.

I have experienced fear all my life, starting when I was just a young child and I could always sense two persons watching me: One was very good, loving, and righteous, and one was evil, manevolent, wanting to harm or kill me. I now know the two persons were God and Satan, watching me ever since I was little. God was the loving, good person watching tenderly over me. Satan was the one who wanted to harm or kill me. Satan has done everything he can to cause me to fear my entire life.

It started with my childhood sexual and physical abuse, and later I was drawn subconsciously like a magnet to men who either physically or verbally abused me. I don't know why, other than that is common for child abuse survivors. Psychologists say it's one's attempt to recreate – and improve upon – a dysfunctional past. These relationships filled me with fear. What was worse than the abuse was my fear of being rejected by them, unloved...and finally, left alone.

Throughout my 20's, I struggled with severe anxiety and panic attacks. I was afraid of strangers, of the dark, of driving somewhere new, of big dogs who might bite me, of snakes, of spiders and other bugs, of bad weather, of getting lost on the highway, of the end of the world and being sent to hell for my sins, of being unloved, of getting old, of disease or injury, of something terrible happening to my children - you name it, I was afraid! Looking back now, I am amazed at how afraid I used to be all the time!

I often repented, and kept giving my life to Jesus at altar calls in churches and was baptized several times, just to make sure I was really saved and wouldn't be eternally punished for my many sins in hell. *Satan tormented me with fear.* Have you ever felt that way?

Since then, I have grown strong in faith and have become an avid student of God's Word. I now have an assurance that I am saved by grace through faith in Christ, and not through any good works. (Ephesians 2:8)

I don't have to be afraid any more of God's judgment or punishment because, “No fear exists where his love is. Rather, perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment. The person who lives in fear doesn't have perfect love.” (1 John 2:18)

It hasn't happened overnight, but God has changed me from being a woman of fear to one of faith. Understand, it's taken me a long time ~ **years**. I've had to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by studying and believing His word, by spending time in His life-changing presence in hours of prayer, by listening to Biblical teaching tapes and audios,

by reading good books, and by surrounding myself with positive, faith-filled people. I've learned about and I speak forth aloud the power of God's words of LIFE from my mouth.

There are still times when the enemy tries to attack my mind with fear. (As Joyce Meyer says, your mind is the battlefield where it all starts!) This is especially true concerning situations with our children, or with finances, which are my vulnerable areas to fear and worry. If you have fear, too, you have to **immediately** pull down those thoughts and strongholds of fear to the obedience of Christ.

"We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity." (2 Corinthians 10:5, The Message)

As long as I keep my mind on Christ, I can rest assured that He has his mind and his thoughts on our children and He is protecting them. (Psalm 91)

As for finances, "Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread." (Psalm 37:25, NLT) God has always provided for our family, and always will – I just need to trust Him! In fact, **God wants to bless us so much that the "vats will overflow with good wine" (Proverbs 3:10, NLT). He desires to bless us so much that we will become a blessing to others!**

What are you afraid of? Your health issues or your children's health? Money problems? Job loss? Never achieving success? If you struggle with fear, I encourage you to read, study, and meditate on God's word each day and to pray continually. **God's presence of glorious light scatters every trace of Satan's darkness. Begin spending a few minutes every day with God.** I have an expression that God gave me last year, and that He gave my dear friends Jane and Mary at around the same time (I love how God confirms His word!): "Take five!" Take five minutes to pray. Your hunger for His presence will grow, and soon you won't be able to get enough of Him!

Sometimes you may need to fast, too. (Ask God to help you through His grace; fasting isn't easy! Start with maybe one meal, and go from there.)

God's word is a powerful weapon against Satan. In fact, it's the one weapon Jesus used when Satan tempted him in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11)

By renewing your mind with the Word of God, you will be transformed by God into a new person by changing the way you think. (Romans 12:2, NLT) Your thoughts of fear and worry will be replaced by faith and joy.



The sun was blazing hot today, and there hadn't been much luck with the catch. They'd been at it all night long. His brothers wanted to take off work early, get something good to eat, and taste some of Noah's fresh, new wine from his vineyards that he had offered them earlier at lunch. Peter cursed loudly at them, telling them in no uncertain terms what would happen to their sorry butts if they left his boat a minute early. There was work to do! Get to it!

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Peter turned around, sighing deeply in regretful remorse at their puzzled, hurt faces. He ignored their last sarcastic words behind his back. His temper was the eternal thorn in his side. **He'd fought it his whole life.** He hated the way the words flew out of his mouth constantly in a rage. His words were like daggers, piercing those he loved the most. Yet his pride often prevented his apologies. He was rash, impulsive, never thinking about something long enough to make a good decision or to say what he should.

Just like this fishing business. Yeah, he knew it, through and through. His father had been a fisherman, and his grandfather before that. The family business, a fair livelihood when making a living wasn't easy these days. And he was good at it. But he'd agreed to do it suddenly and rashly as a young man, for his mother's sake, when his father got fatally sick one day, **instead of pursuing the big dreams in his heart.** He was tired of it.

God, the stench of the fish, the long hours, the hot sun. He wanted something different. He felt empty and hollow inside, frustrated. There had to be something more. ***Life felt – meaningless, yeah, that was the word. Was he making any difference here? Did he even matter?***

Peter was a big, tough man, a man's man. He'd fought a lot of men by fist and his wits, and always came out the winner of the brawl. The tears that sprang to his eyes took him by surprise. He suddenly felt **overcome with pain, emptiness, sadness, loneliness,** and he was afraid he would start crying.

Crying! In front of all these men? No! He began pouring his energy into his work, yelling louder at his brothers and the lazy, good-for-nothin' men who were supposed to be helping them today. They weren't even worth their poor wages!

Suddenly he heard the crowds yelling louder than him. He turned around to see a parade of excited people surrounding a Man, shouting at him to touch them, to heal them.

The Man stopped and looked at Peter, staring straight into his eyes. He grinned and waved. Peter's brow furrowed, and he scratched his dirty beard. Who was this guy? He didn't know him, but **He acted like He knew exactly who Peter was.** The Man seemed to focus on no one but Peter now. He walked over to the two fishing boats on the Lake Gennesaret shore.

"Catch anything today?" the Man asked. Peter heard the crowd calling him Jesus. They were still yelling and trying to get to Jesus, but Jesus stepped aside from them.

"Nah," Peter laughed. "We've worked all night and haven't caught anything. One of those days."

The crowds were still trying to press against Jesus, so he asked Peter to push out from the shore so that he could teach them. He taught them great truths, and Peter listened intently. He had never heard anyone teach this way before, with stories.

When Jesus finished teaching, he said to Peter, "**Launch out into the deep.** Let your nets down." His calm voice had a ring of authority. There was also a twinkle in his eyes, as if he had a surprise for him. Peter wondered if his family was in the fishing business, too.

"Well, alright, Master, if you say so. **At your word I will let down the net,**" Peter said, signaling to his brothers to let down the nets again. They groaned. He couldn't wait

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until they came up empty to show the guy that Peter knew what he was doing. Peter folded his arms, semi-smiling, knowing it was no use....they weren't catching anything!

Peter felt a rush of wind. There were so many fish that the nets were close to breaking. Peter's brothers were yelling, whistling, and clapping, signaling to the others to come and help them. Peter looked in shock at the net full of fish, then up at the Man.

Suddenly his eyes grew wide with terror, and he knew by revelation this was a man of God. "Get away from me!" he screamed in fear, backing away in the boat. "Get away! I'm a sinful man!" Jesus grinned again at him. "Don't worry, friend," he said, clapping his hand on his shoulder lovingly. **"From now on, you'll be catching men."**



Oh, how I love dear, imperfect disciples like impulsive, rash, fearful Peter and "doubting Thomas" in the Bible! They give me such hope! ***If God can use them, maybe He can even use me!***

When Peter saw the miracle of the fish and he realized Jesus was a holy man, he became afraid. Why? Because he knew what sort of man he was. He knew that he was "unclean." We, as human beings, as children of Adam, are all unclean.

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23, NLT) Jesus' words to Peter are so comforting. Basically he was telling him, "Chill! Just relax! **I know who you are – and I love you anyway, and I'm going to use you anyway for MY glory!**"

This is what God says to us, too. God knows all about our sins and our weaknesses, yet He loves us anyway, unconditionally. He wants to use us and the gifts inside of us, despite ourselves!

God forgives us when we sin and we accept Christ and ask him to forgive us. God made the way for our complete forgiveness through Jesus' death on the cross.

This is our joy – the knowledge that we love because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19) That God had a plan in place for our salvation and redemption before we were ever born – and a great and specific purpose for our lives. God's and our enemy would strike at Jesus, but Jesus' heel of authority would crush the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15)

This isn't the only time in scripture we see Peter afraid. When Jesus began to share with his disciples about his crucifixion, Peter responded in fear may this never be and Jesus rebuked him. (Mark 8:33) After Jesus was taken away by the authorities and Peter was confronted by 3 people that he was one of Jesus' disciples, he denied it vehemently in fear. (Matthew 26:69-75)

Yes, Peter struggled with fear. Jesus had warned Peter that Satan had asked to have him, sought permission to sift Peter like wheat - but Jesus had already prayed for him that his faith would not fail and told Peter when he had repented, to strengthen his brothers. (Luke 22:31-33)

That word sift in the original Greek language is *siniazō*, which means "to shake in a sieve" or "figuratively inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow."

Satan wants to sift you, too, to try your faith and to overthrow it. But Jesus is praying for you, as He did Peter, so that your faith won't fail and so you can strengthen your brothers and sisters with the same comfort God has given you. (2 Corinthians 1:4)

You don't have to be afraid, dear friend- not of God's judgment, not of what the future holds, not of other people, not of disapproval, not of bad things happening to you or loved ones. Our joy is also knowing that God will never leave us alone. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) His perfect love will deliver you from all fear. (1 John 4:18)

Take Action step: Identify any fears you may have. Take them in prayer to God. Also, gather some pebbles (or shells) in your hand –one for each fear you have. Take the pebbles or shells to a creek, river, lake, or ocean, and toss them in, one by one, totally surrendering them to God. Let go of fear.

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Journaling Questions:

1. How do you identify with the disciple Peter? His rashness? His temper? His fear?
2. Write down the area of sin where you struggle the most. What is at the root of it? If it's anger, what are you angry about? If it's depression (lack of peace and joy), what circumstances in your life are contributing to your depression? Is there something way back in your childhood that has caused you to feel sad and empty? Are present circumstances hurting you or weighing you down? What can you do to change your life's circumstances? Do you struggle with self-pity or being self-absorbed? If it's fear, what are you afraid of? Where is that fear coming from? Has it always been there? Study and renew your mind with scriptures on the topic you're struggling with. One good place is the Psalms. David was very real about his struggles with God.
3. Have you ever experienced what Peter did when the miracle of the fish occurred and he told Jesus to get away from him, because he realized he was a holy man of God? Have you ever come face to face with the realization that you are "unclean" and not worthy of being in God's presence?
4. Have you received the good news that God has cleaned you by the power of Jesus' blood and you are now cleansed of sin and holy in his sight? Meditate on Isaiah 1:18, ESV: "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins

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are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”

5. Have you ever felt sifted by Satan? How? Did you feel all alone or did you feel God's strength and Jesus' prayers during the sifting – did you feel His presence there with you in the midst of the storm? Describe what happened. What encouragement can you give others who are being sifted as wheat like Peter and like you?
6. Jesus let Peter know that, despite his fear and his weaknesses, He was going to use him in a great way. Do you know that God wants to use you in an incredible way, too? He has great things ahead for you! (Jeremiah 29:11) Do you know what your life's purpose and calling is? I encourage you to discover your purpose and your calling, and to identify your spiritual gifts. You can find some good resources about your purpose at my Estore here. <http://www.bethjones.net/beth-jones-estore/>. Another wonderful resource on discovering your calling is the book *Step Out and Take Your Place* by Krista Dunk, which you can find here. <http://www.stepoutandtakeyourplace.com/>

Chapter 3: Joy comes from The Holy Spirit

“Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly, ‘You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, the babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true!’” (Luke 1:41-45, The Message)

Maybe like me, you didn't grow up in a church which taught on the Holy Spirit. Oh, He was reticently acknowledged, given a stiff, formal, bare nod as one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, mentioned while singing the Doxology hymn - but treated more like an invisible ghost, He wasn't talked about much. He's the God we hardly know! And He certainly wasn't allowed to have His way in the religious church I grew up in – let's just get on with the Sunday program!

Religion versus relationship is never what Jesus intended for his people. The Holy Spirit is the POWER source of the Godhead and in us!

I did some research on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a THING. (John 14:16, John 15:26, John 16:7-8) Although He's sometimes called “the Holy Ghost,” he's not some ethereal, spooky fog. He's a PERSON. Like you and me. He's JUST as important as God and Jesus, not some little side dish who we should ignore.

He has feelings. He hurts. (Hebrews 10:29) He grieves. (Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30) He smiles. He laughs. He sings. He dances. (Zephaniah 3:17) He loves! (Romans 15:30, 2 Corinthians 13:14)

The Holy Spirit is HOLY, JUST, and RIGHTEOUS. He gives you power over your flesh to keep you from messing up! (Romans 8:4) He convicts you of sin when you do mess up. (John 16:8-11)

The Holy Spirit gives us wonderful, precious spiritual gifts from God. He empowers us to share the gospel with other people, and to use our spiritual gifts for the glory of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:8, Ephesians 3:16, Acts 21:4, Joel 2:28) He anoints us with the anointing that teaches us all things! (1 John 2:27)

The Holy Spirit is part of the Holy Trinity. He is God and was with God from the beginning of creation. (Genesis 1:2, 3) He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10), knows everything (Isaiah 40:13), is all powerful and yet is a distinct person from God and Jesus. (Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:29)

I described the Holy Spirit this way to the preschool Sunday school class I used to teach: “Think of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit like neopolitan ice cream: there are three flavors of chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry – but they're all really good ice cream!”

God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all very good and all God - but they're three distinct Persons, three different flavors!" The kids loved this analogy! (Please don't angrily email me that God is NOT ice cream and that I'm being irreverent!)



The Holy Spirit is what gives us LIFE. The Holy Spirit is alive. He's the LIFE GIVER. (1 Samuel 10:6, Ezekiel 37:9) He's the one who raised Jesus in supernatural from the dead to defeat Satan FOREVER! (Romans 8:11)

He's the one who fills you and me with the living Spirit of Jesus Christ when we accept Him as our Lord and Savior. He comes to live INSIDE OF US, and seals us with His Spirit as belonging to God. (John 14:7, Romans 8:9, Matthew 3:11, Ephesians 1:13)

Most of all, the Holy Spirit gives us JOY. (Romans 14:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, Galatians 5:22) The joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) **Apart from the filling of the power of the Holy Spirit, we can't have joy. Without joy, we won't have power, will grow weak, and become vulnerable to Satan's attack.**

Maybe you've never been taught about being FILLED with the Holy Spirit – not just the initial filling when you receive Christ at salvation, **but the continual filling of His Spirit, which enables us to be witnesses for Christ, teaches us all things, gives us strength each day, helps us to use and empowers us in our spiritual gifts, and gives us revelation into the Word of God. Being filled with the Holy Spirit will give you power to do what God has called you to do and to be.**

The filling of the Holy Spirit is not primarily, and should not primarily be, an emotional experience with shouting, screaming, shaking, falling, etc.

Some people **may** laugh, cry, tremble, groan, etc., when genuinely touched by God's power, such as Elizabeth did when Mary came to her. Your own experience of being filled with God's Spirit may simply be very quiet and peaceful. God touches people in different ways.

But the filling of the Holy Spirit is not JUST emotional. One thing is common to all – it's real and it's undeniable.

Ephesians 5:18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit! If we aren't filled with God, we are going to try living each day on our own, and will be quickly depleted, "running on fumes." Just like your car needs gas to go anywhere, you and I need the fuel and energy and power of the Holy Spirit for our lives!

Without the continual filling of the Holy Spirit, we will not have joy. We'll be drained. The filling of God's Spirit is not just for special people, either. It's for all. God didn't hand-pick only a few people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. **He wants to pour out His Spirit on everyone – men, women, children, and teens. (Joel 2:28)**

Finally, I realize that any reference to the filling of the Holy Spirit can be controversial, that doesn't mean the Holy Spirit should be ignored. Different churches have different doctrine. As the saying goes, you can't throw the baby out with the bath water! Just because there are some people abusing the gifts and giving false teachings on the Holy Spirit doesn't mean we should run from the Holy Spirit. **Remember, He is our power source!**

I was raised in a traditional church that did not teach on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, certainly nothing like prophecy, the gift of tongues or interpretation of tongues, healings, and miracles. The Holy Spirit was pretty much ignored. Later in life, I became part of a homegroup and then a church that **gave balanced teachings on the power of the Holy Spirit. It's so important that we learn to walk in the Spirit each day – because then we are walking in His loving character and in the FRUIT of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)**

I recommend my own website <http://www.bethjones.net> and the following resources if you want to learn more (these are available at Amazon):

- *The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit* by Lester Sumrall
- *The 3 Colors of Ministry* by Christian Schwarz
- *Filled with the Holy Spirit: Understanding God's Power In Your Life* by Joyce Meyer (I highly recommend any books or audios by Joyce Meyer!)



Rachel felt as if she was going to just lose it. God, this was more than she could bear. Surely he was not going to require this of her. Her daughter, was sick, so very sick. She had the look of death upon her. Rachel was praying as she had never prayed before. *God, please heal my child. Lord God, Jehovah Rophe, please touch her miraculously. Lord God, if I or my husband have sinned to cause this, please forgive us and have mercy on us. I beg you, God, I beg you!*

Rachel burst into tears again. She had to pull herself together. Her child could not see her fear, could not know what she was thinking – that she was afraid her daughter was going to die. But then again the child's fever was so high, she was incoherent, anyway. They had bathed her and treated her with medicines, herbs, anything to help.

The doctors were saying that nothing could be done. Relatives from far away had come to help Rachel, cooking, cleaning, fussing at Rachel to eat, eat something! She

needed to take care of herself before she got sick, too! They were praying, and sometimes speaking in hushed whispers, which frightened her even more. She knew they could see the spirit of death upon her, too.

She had finally gone downstairs a minute to get a breath of fresh air outside. Her husband Jairus had gone to find the man Jesus in town to heal her. Jesus the miracle worker, they called Him. Would he be able to heal their child?

The sun warmed her face and her heart. Yes, Jairus would make sure she'd get help. He was a good, kind man, a great leader in their community, the leader of the local synagogue. Everyone respected him. As she looked down the dusty road, praying, hoping with faint hope, one of the servants came hurriedly outdoors to tell her the bad news. Her daughter had passed away, she said, grabbing hold of Rachel in case she fainted.

Something then rose up inside of Rachel – steel faith in her God. “No!” she shouted. The servant thought she was in denial, as many people do when they hear tragic news. “She will be well soon! Help is on the way! I praise you, Jehovah Rophe, I praise you!”

The servant wondered if the news had made her mistress' mind snap. The mourners went upstairs, wailing loudly and throwing ashes on their heads. Rachel kept her eyes on the road for her husband and for Jesus.

Jairus walked pass the crowds of people, straight to this Man Jesus, bowing his head respectfully, and asked him politely if he would come to heal his daughter who was deathly sick. To his great relief, Jesus said yes. As he began walking with him, suddenly, there was an interruption. A woman had touched the hem of His garment, then disappeared back into the crowd. Jesus stopped and said to the crowd, “Who touched me?” Jairus' heart sank. If they delayed, his little girl might die. He began to pray.

Jesus' disciples laughed loudly. “Master,” they said, “How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’ There are crowds all around you! Everyone here is trying to touch you!”

“No,” Jesus said. “Someone touched me.” He had felt virtue and miraculous power leave him at the touch. He turned as a woman, trembling violently, came to him and fell in fear to his feet, explaining that she had been bleeding for 12 years and needed a miracle. She knew if she touched him, she would be healed. Jesus told her then that her faith had made her well and to go in peace

She praised God, crying, and hugging Jesus. She was well, she was healed! She had felt His power touch her, she shouted. The bleeding had stopped! The crowd gasped at this great miracle. They knew who she was. She'd been to doctor after doctor to be healed, and no one had been able to heal her. No one but Jesus! Everyone began clapping, whistling, praising God.

Just as Jesus turned to Jairus to go with him, someone pushed through the crowd. It was one of Jairus' servants, “Master,” he said, breathlessly, for he had run the whole way, “I have news to tell you. Come quickly. Your daughter – your daughter has passed away. I am so sorry to have given you these bad tidings, master. Don't bother the teacher any more, master. Your daughter is dead.”

His heart was gripped with fear and grief. He instantly thought of his grieving wife, left alone with their child's limp, lifeless body. Before he could say a word, Jesus stopped him. “Don't be afraid,” Jesus quickly told him. “Only believe.”

Jesus lovingly touched his shoulder, and Jairus felt great peace. He knew that everything was going to be all right. Yes, Jairus was expecting a miracle.

Jesus didn't let anyone follow him but Peter, James, and John the brother of James. He did not hurry, either. They were on God's time table. At the house there was a commotion. People were crying and wailing loudly in the daughter's bedroom. Jesus rebuked them. "What's going on?" he asked them. "Why are all of you falling apart? She isn't dead. She's just sleeping!"

The mourners laughed at him. "Are you crazy? She's dead! Touch her. She's ice cold. There is no life in her, no heartbeat, no breath! She's gone! Don't give her parents false hope! Her mother is already in denial that she's dead!"

"Get out! Don't you know who I AM?" Jesus commanded them with authority. They fell backward to the floor as He spoke without even touching them. Shocked, not understanding what had just happened, they sobered, and left quickly in fear. There was no room here for doubt and unbelief. Only room for faith in an almighty God who does the impossible.

Jesus then smiled at Rachel, who was sitting on her daughter's bed, stroking her child's face and her limp arms, tears streaming down her face. Would she ever hear her child laugh again, hear her sweet voice? But Rachel's lips still moved silently in faith-filled prayer. *If Elijah could bring the widow's dead son to life, surely you, O God, can bring life to my child, too...you are the Lord the Healer*, she prayed. She looked up at Jesus then and she had never seen so much love in anyone's eyes. And such peace. His eyes, his smile, took away any lingering doubts and fears. She looked expectantly at Him. So this was Jesus...the one she'd heard so much about.

Jesus looked at the beautiful little girl tenderly. Jairus put his hands on his wife's shoulders, knowing only God's intervention could save her now. He watched silently as Jesus spoke to his daughter and took her by the hand. "Talitha koum! Little girl, get up," he said simply, but his voice rang with great authority.

The air became electric with supernatural power, and suddenly she stirred, opening her lashes and looking into the eyes of Jesus.

"Hello," he said, smiling at her. She smiled sweetly, not knowing who He was, but feeling as if this man knew exactly who she was. She wondered why he and two other strangers were in her room with her parents. She got up out of the bed, stretching, yawning loudly, and began walking around the room, saying, "Oh, I feel so much better now! That nap sure helped!"

She looked over at her mother and her father, whose mouths had fallen open and saw the tears that began pouring down their faces. Her color had fully returned. The fever was gone. She was well, completely well.

"What's wrong, mama, papa? I'm fine! I'm okay now!" she smiled at them, laughing reassuringly. *Why had they been so worried*, she wondered.

She asked Jesus' name and who He was. "I am a friend. My name is Jesus. These are my friends Peter and John," he said, grinning at her and she smiled back. She really liked this man! Then he turned to her parents.

"Don't tell anyone about this. Now I am sure she's hungry by now. Give her something good to eat," he told them.

“Are you hungry? Would you like some pita bread and hummus?” he asked her. She nodded eagerly, and said to him, “Would you like some, too? All of you are staying for dinner, aren’t you?” Jesus and the disciples laughed and said yes, of course. Her parents hugged and kissed her, crying with joy, thanking Jesus and praising God.

Rachel looked again into her beautiful daughter’s sweet face, astounded at this miracle. She closed her eyes in overflowing gratitude to God for all He had done. How could she ever thank Jesus for His goodness? *Weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning.* (Psalm 30:5)



I love this story in the Bible. As a parent, the story makes me cry. I can’t imagine anything being more difficult than the death of a child. I love how the little girl is brought back to life by Jesus. But I also think the story shows how real life is.

We so often are looking for answers, or THE answer as Jesus is, when suddenly life interrupts. Distractions. Crises. Tragedies. **Life is unpredictable, messy, frightening. Even for us Christian believers, we have no promise of everything going according to plan or everything being pleasant.**

Jairus had found Jesus, the miracle healer, but then Jesus was touched by this woman with the issue of blood and it caused a delay. **God has his own time table,** and we can’t hurry Him. **You can not rush God!** I have always felt that God is EXTREMELY slow, but His timing is always perfect! God never shows up too late.

It would have been rude for Jairus to yell at the woman with the issue of blood that he needed Jesus first, because his daughter was deathly ill. But don’t many of us often feel that way? We get mad and ask God why He is helping someone else more than us! And all that does is steal our joy and our peace, and makes us discontent. **We need to have thankful hearts. I encourage you to begin creating a gratitude journal, thanking God for all He’s done as a memorial to His miracles in your life.. Joy comes from intentionally remembering and praising God for His goodness – even when things don’t happen the way we want them to.**

The Bible doesn’t show us what Jairus’ reaction was to the bleeding woman. Maybe he was irritated. Maybe he became afraid about his daughter, that Jesus would get there too late. We don’t know.

What we do know is that **Jesus wasn’t in a hurry because He knows our times are in God’s hands.** He took time to minister to this woman who had been in so much pain for so long. Jesus never ignores us. **He will never forget us because we are written on the palms of his hands. (Isaiah 49:16)**

Another thing that stands out to me in this story is how Jesus only allowed Peter, John, and James to go with him and how he commanded the mourners to get out of the room. Jesus likes and uses faith-filled, positive people! He wants people who will simply trust, believe in, and obey Him! The Bible says that **without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)**

Look at how often in the Bible Jesus rebuked his disciples for not having faith! **Faith creates an atmosphere that is conducive for miracles. Doubt and unbelief have the opposite effect. In fact, in Mark 6:5-6, and Matthew 13:58, it says that Jesus wasn't even able to do miracles in his home town because of their unbelief!** God is a rewarder of those who earnestly, passionately seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus told Jairus to not be afraid, but to believe. I believe Jairus responded with faith, as well as his wife. **Do you believe and trust Jesus' words to you? Joy comes from trusting and having faith in Jesus. We know that the power of the Holy Spirit can do miracles, such as in this story with the little girl.**

Take Action step. Begin a gratitude journal. Thank God for all that he's done for you as a memorial to Him. Record your prayers in the journal or in a prayer box, and write down when those prayers are answered, and how. Write down how the Holy Spirit accomplished this in your life, and thank Him. Share this gratitude journal with your husband, kids, friends, family during the holidays (Thanksgiving is a great time to do this!)

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Journaling Questions:

1. Were you raised in a church that taught about the filling of the Holy Spirit? What are your thoughts on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Spirit? When you think of the Holy Spirit, do you view the Holy Spirit as a person, an "it," an invisible and even mysterious part of God? Do a study on the Holy Spirit.
2. Are you walking in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit? One way we can check this is to see if we're walking in the FRUIT of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and if we have God's character in our lives. Another way is to ask ourselves if we are doing the same things Jesus did and even "greater things." (John 14:12)
3. Think of Jesus raising the little girl from the dead. Have you ever seen anyone raised from the dead like this little girl? Do you have the faith to do this? Why or why not? Do you believe it is possible? That same power that raised Jesus and others from the dead is inside of you!

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4. How do you think you would have felt if you were Jairus and you were “interrupted” by the woman with the issue of blood, if it was your child that was deathly sick? How would you have responded? Think of the “divine interruptions” that occur in your life each day. Could this story lead you to view them with a different perspective as “God appointments”?
5. Is there some area where you need Jesus’ virtue and power to flow into your life, like the woman with the issue of blood? If you just reach out to touch Jesus, He will give you exactly what you need!
6. Are you a person of faith like Peter, John, and James whom Jesus chose to go with him to perform the miracle of raising the little girl, or are you more like the doubters and mourners who were wailing and who laughed at the impossibility of a miracle? Ask God to help you be a person of great faith who believes –and does – the impossible for God’s glory.
7. Has there been a time in your life where God has done a miracle like He did with the little girl? Praise God for these joyful times in your life. Joy comes from having faith in and trusting God.

Through these tips in this ebook, you can have the deep, abiding, daily joy that God desires to give you, because the joy of the Lord truly is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10). Dear friend, God wants to fill you with “joy unspeakable.” (1 Peter 1:8) I want to close with this prayer for you:

Dear God, I lift up those who have read this ebook and I pray that You would, first of all, save them if they do not know you yet. You desire to give them eternal life and give them a good future. (Jeremiah 29:11). I pray secondly that You would help them to discover and fulfill the great purpose you have for their lives, finding out what their calling is, what their spiritual gifts are, and using them for Your glory, Jesus. Third, I ask that You would fill them with the overflowing power of the Holy Spirit so that they would walk in power and victory here on earth, and to do even greater works than You did, Jesus. I pray that You would fill them with joy and peace, and bless them above all they ask or think. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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Beth Jones

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