

## **“I WANT MORE!”**

**Philippians 4:4-13**

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The story of Oliver Twist is a sad one. Oliver Twist is born in a workhouse in 1830s England. His mother, whose name no one knows, is found on the street and dies just after Oliver's birth. Oliver spends the first nine years of his life in a badly run home for young orphans and then is transferred to a workhouse for adults. While still at the orphanage, he was constantly cold, tired, lonely and hungry. One evening at supper, Oliver committed a major gaffe. Let's see that happen:

CLIP Of OLIVER TWIST ASKING FOR MORE.

Oliver wanted more of whatever glop they were serving, and it seemed to the pampered and overfed overseers that he had committed a capital crime.

When it comes to our lives of what do we want more? IF IT IS JUST MATERIAL WEALTH, THAT'S GREED AND IDOLATRY. IF WHAT WE WANT MORE OF IS RELEVANT TO OUR FAITH AND CHARACTER, THAT IS GOOD AND IDEAL.

As we stand on the threshold of a brand new unspoiled year, let us want more, but more of the right things.

Listen to the text: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”  
Philippians 4:4-13 (NASB).

Of what should we want more in 2017?

## **I. I WANT MORE JOY!**

- A. This is good advice: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”
  - 1. First note the area and source of joy: “in the Lord.”
  - 2. Then note the constancy of joy; “always.”
- B. Let’s see what the Bible says about joy:
  - 1. Joy, in the Bible, means, “to exult in gladness; to be filled with delight.”
  - 2. We can have joy in every time of life, even the difficult.
    - a. James said, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4 (NASB).
    - b. After the apostles were flogged for preaching about Jesus, “they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Acts 5:40-41 (NASB).
    - c. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13 (NASB).
    - d. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1-2 (NASB).
- C. So it is not only when the sun shines, we are well, the bills are paid, the kids don’t fight and the dog doesn’t bite that joy is a possibility.
  - 1. Joy does not depend on circumstances but upon our attitude in those circumstances.
  - 2. Real joy is based on our relationship to Jesus.
    - a. He said “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” John 15:9-11 (NASB).
    - b. John wrote, “We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.” 1 John 1:3-4 (NLT).
    - c. Linda and Shirley sang,

While the world looks upon me  
As I struggle along  
They say I've have nothing  
But they are so wrong  
In my heart I'm rejoicing  
How I wish they could see  
Thank you Lord  
For your blessing on me!

- D. What good is joy, especially in difficult times?
1. It is good because it gives God honor by trusting Him.
  2. It is good because it makes us strong: It gives us strength to endure: “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB).
  3. It is good because it makes us healthier: “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength.” Proverbs 17:22 (NLT).
  4. It is good because it makes us optimistic and hopeful, but not as though looking through rose-colored glasses.
  5. It is good because it is attractive to others.
  6. It is good because it is relaxing and refreshing.
  7. It is good because it attracts others to want it for themselves.
  8. It is good because it comforts others and tends to cheer them.
- E. There was once a young boy who went to spend the week with his grandfather on the farm. While walking around he noticed the chickens, they were scratching and playing around. The little lad said, “They ain’t got it”. Next he saw a colt in the field playing and kicking up its heels to which he replied, “He ain’t got it”. After examining all of the animals on his grandfather’s farm and seeing that none of them had “it,” this boy finally found the old donkey. When he saw the donkey’s long, frowning face and the way that the donkey just stood there he called for his grandfather to come quick. “I found it, I found it” the boy kept yelling. When his grandfather asked what he had found he said, “Pawpaw, I found an animal that has the same kind of religion that you have.” TOO MANY CONSIDER LONG-FACED JOYLESSNESS TO BE HOLY.

I HOPE YOU WANT MORE REAL JOY IN 2017! BUT, FURTHERMORE,

## **II. I WANT MORE CONTENTMENT!**

- A. We all need to learn what Paul learned. He said, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”
1. Contentment is not like a cow lying in a field of clover munching at her leisure.
  2. Contentment is a sense of adequacy, it’s an attitude of having enough.; it’s the awareness that what we have is sufficient.
- B. The discontented never seem to have enough, so they:
1. Commit crimes or cheat and lie to get what they cannot obtain legitimately.
  2. Destroy marriages to find a mate who might contribute more happiness.
  3. Jump from job to job looking for some elusive contentment.

4. Miss the benefit of what they have while bemoaning what they do not have.
  5. Become pessimistic and self-pitying.
- C. In contrast, Linda and Shirley sang,

There's a roof up above me  
I've a good place to sleep  
There's food on my table  
And shoes on my feet  
You gave me your love Lord  
And a fine family  
Thank you Lord  
For your blessings on me!

- D. Paul wrote, "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1 Timothy 6:8-10 (NASB).
- E. There is an old Persian fable of a hen, a mouse, and a rabbit who lived together in a little house. They were happy and contented because they shared all the work. The rabbit cooked the meals. The chicken carried in the firewood. The mouse brought the water from the nearby brook. Each did his work faithfully and contentedly. But one day while the hen was going to the forest for wood a busybody crow asked her what she was doing. When told, the crow complained that the hen was doing the hardest part of the work and that the rabbit and mouse were making an easy-mark of her. Try as she would, the thought kept rankling in the hen's mind, and when she returned home with her load of wood and her still heavier load of discontent, she cackled: "I do the, hardest work ever. We ought to change our jobs." Discontent spreads, as you know, and immediately the rabbit and mouse also thought they had been doing the hardest work. They agreed to change jobs; the mouse would cook, the rabbit would gather the firewood, the hen would bring the water. As the rabbit hopped into the woods, a big fox trailed him, caught him, and ate him. The chicken put the pail into the creek, but the current pulled the pail down under the chicken with it. The mouse wondered why they did not come back, but not for long. While he was sitting on the edge of the big pot of soup, he lost his balance and fell in, Through discontent all three not only lost their happiness but their very lives.

WANT MORE JOY, MORE CONTENTMENT AND,

### **III. I WANT MORE STRENGTH!**

- A. Let us all say with Paul, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
1. Not all things in a Superman fashion -- "Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings at a single bound!"
  2. But strength to do whatever God calls us to do, to face whatever God calls us to face and to be whatever God calls us to be.

3. This is an inner, spiritual strength: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” Ephesians 6:10-11 (NASB).
- B. That’s one thing Grace does for us:
1. Paul asked for deliverance from a thorn in the flesh – some undefined ailment – and we read, “Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NASB).
  2. And he told Timothy, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 2:1 (NASB).
- C. Annie Johnson Flint wrote:

God hath not promised we shall not know  
 Toil and temptation, trouble and woe;  
 He hath not told us we shall not bear  
 Many a burden, many a care.

But God hath promised strength for the day,  
 Rest for the labor, light for the way,  
 Grace for the trials, help from above,  
 Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

- D. Pray not for tasks equal to your strength but rather pray for strength equal to your tasks.
- E. Herbert Lord, a missionary in Korea teaches us how to strengthen ourselves in the Lord. A North Korean soldier had captured him, and said, "In one hand I have a Bible. In the other I have a gun. As a Communist, I despise your God. Pray to Him to tell you which hand holds the Bible and which holds the gun. If the answer is wrong, I shall shoot you." Herbert Lord knelt and prayed. In a moment or so, the guard asked, "Has your God told you which hand holds the Bible?" "I did not ask Him for that" the man of God said. "Then, what did you pray for?" "For two things. I prayed to God to help me keep my temper, and I asked Him to give me strength to die decently." The soldier's face contorted in anger, but he lowered the pistol and turned to walk away. That's an example of strengthening yourself in the Lord.

If you want more joy, more contentment, and more strength get more of Jesus. You’ll get more of Him when He gets more of you.

Let Him have yourself and He will give you more!

LIFT AN EMPTY CUP AND HE WILL FILL IT TO OVERFLOWING! THE ONLY LIMIT IS THE SIZE OF YOUR CUP.