

Rejoicing at Other's Success

1- Objective

- ❖ Real happiness comes when we make people happy and see the happiness in their eyes.
- ❖ Try to oppose the feeling of jealousy or hatred towards anyone.

2- References

- ❖ <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/rejoicing-others-1788/>
- ❖ <http://www.launchwhileworking.com/stop-hating-five-reasons-to-get-happy-when-someone-else-finds-success>

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ "Love ... does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6)
- ❖ "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15)
- ❖ "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12)

4- Lesson Outlines

- ❖ One of the fathers said: You can measure your degree of love by how much you really rejoice for the benefit of others. It is easy and common to have sorrow with those who grieve but not the same with those who rejoice especially when you lack what makes them happy.

Why do we feel threatened by other people's success?

- ❖ Limited Resources: There are only a certain number of students that get A's and a certain number of accepted applicants.
- ❖ There can only be one leader: "Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?' So Saul eyed David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 18:8-9).
- ❖ Competitiveness has allowed us to forget God's hand at work: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children ... Also he made him a tunic of many colors. Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more" (Genesis 37: 3-6).
- ❖ Comparing ourselves with others: "Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children. Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die!'" (Genesis 30:1).
- ❖ No team mentality: "But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:24).
- ❖ Not seeing God behind every success: "Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive'" (Genesis 50:19-20).

Feeling bad about people success lead us to envying and to harming ourselves

- ❖ Cain and Abel: “And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell ... and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him and then felt the agony and the guilt ... And Cain said to the Lord ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear!’” (Genesis 4:1-15).
- ❖ Joseph and his brothers: “Now when they saw him ... they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, ‘Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams!’” (Genesis 37:18-20). Later, they felt the sorrow. Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us” (Genesis 42:21).
- ❖ Saul and David: Saul was a man of war, but David was a simple shepherd, but he was more successful at war than Saul. This threatened Saul and instead of rejoicing over the victory of his own people and army, he became jealous. He never considered David to be a God-sent asset for him, but instead a rival. That is why he was trying all his life to kill him and once he said to David while ashamed from himself: “You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil” (1 Samuel 24:17).
- ❖ The Wise men of Babylon and Daniel: “So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men ... Then the secret was revealed to Daniel ... the king promoted Daniel” (Daniel 2: 13,19,48) Then these men made the plot of the Lion’s den (Daniel 6) instead of thanking him as a savior.
- ❖ Parable of the laborers: “They complained against the landowner, saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’” (Matthew 20:1-16).
- ❖ The chief priests who were supposed to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, were jealous from Him and condemned Him to death “Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness’” (Luke 22:52-53).

Why should we rejoice with others?

- ❖ The friendship of David and Jonathan is a good example for true love: Jonathan confronted his father to defend David although he knew that David will take his place as the future king (1 Samuel 19), and then disclosed to David the intention of his father to kill him and made him flee (1 Samuel 20). When Jonathan died, David wrote a great poem describing how well was Jonathan to him (2 Samuel 1:17-27).
- ❖ God distributes talents among His people; each person is suited to a certain service. We should not feel bad if we do not have the same talents as another: “And if the ear should

say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body?" (1 Corinthians 12:16).

- ❖ We all have different roles and purposes and we should work to cultivate our God-given abilities. A garden with many flowers and trees, each one looks different, and God prunes each one to meet their full potential, but we are not all the same. St. Paul said, "But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ... But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:20-26).
- ❖ The parable of the talents (Matthew 15) shows us that it is not how much talents did you get that matters, but how much did you gain with your talents is what matters: "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away" (Matthew 15: 29).
- ❖ Problems come when we do something outside the purpose God has given us and we want what we have no control over like Abraham who married Hagar and begot Ishmael who was not according to the will of God and later he had to cast him out (Genesis 21).

Some ideas to actually help doing it sincerely

- ❖ Make it a habit to give thanks for other people's success: Add a spot on your daily prayer/meditation list for giving thanks for the wins and successes of others.
- ❖ Create a daily gratitude list: Remind yourself of all the wonderful things you have to be grateful for.
- ❖ Proactively look for opportunities to shine a spotlight on someone else publically: Others may be bashful about mentioning their own victories but still appreciate having their efforts recognized.
- ❖ Confront your jealousy: Be honest with yourself when you notice your thoughts and feelings heading down a negative path.
- ❖ Start with the people you love. Charity starts at home and so does the rejoicing.

5- Conclusion

- ❖ God will grant each working person success in their life "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name" (Hebrews 6:10).
- ❖ Our role is to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and not be an obstacle. Naomi was a great example with Ruth, her daughter in Law "Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him" (Ruth 4:16).
- ❖ Each person's success is for the glory of God: "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man" (Genesis 39: 2). "The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper" (Genesis 39:23).

6- Activities / Discussion points

- ❖ Comments together on this funny story

Two persons in a village were always in dispute; one was tightfisted and the other deleterious (never wants any good for anyone). The mayor of the village wanted to put an end for their hatred, brought them both and gave them a deal and said: Listen you have 5 minutes to decide and whoever answers first, I will take his word. The deal was: whatever you ask for, I give it to you but I will give your friend double of what you asked for. They kept thinking for one minute, 2, 3 then the mayor said only 2 minutes left, one minute, few second... the tightfisted could not decide and the deleterious, who could not withstand any double good for the other, said in the last few seconds: "take out one of my eyes".