

Dr. Ron Armstrong • December 5, 2021
Advent: Joyful, Rejoicing (Gaudete) Sunday

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 32:11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Proverbs 19:11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

A. The third Sunday of Advent is about joy.

1. "Joy" and "happiness" seem close, but they're used differently. They have different connotations.
 - a. "I'm happy" has a connotation of being content with my circumstances.
 - b. Joy isn't connected to circumstances. In the Bible, joy is something to be sought and expected no matter what our circumstances are.
2. But why don't people choose what makes them "happy"? Because they don't know. Predicting what will make you happy is harder than it looks.
 - a. "Impact bias." It's difficult to estimate how intensely you will feel something and for how long you will feel it that intensely.
 - b. "Attenuating circumstances." They will always make good circumstances not as

good and bad circumstances not as bad. (Attenuate: Reduce the force or effect.)
3. You may or may not find some happiness somewhere else, or with someone else, or doing something else, but for joy you don't have to go anywhere.

B. Joy is made from two key ingredients: thankfulness and effective relationships.

1. Thankfulness should be thought of as a habit or emotional muscle. The more you practice it, the stronger it gets.
2. Thankfulness shouldn't be tied to our circumstances. We have lots to be grateful for even in the middle of tough times. It's a matter of choosing gratitude and contentment in the Lord.
3. Joy is available when circumstances are bad, but tough when relationships are bad. So:
 - a. Be careful with them. Use your tools:
 - I. Encouragement is a better tool than humor.
 - II. We all make messes. Clean them up with humility and gentleness.
 - II. See their actual needs, not what you think they should need or what you need.
 - b. Don't intentionally test them. (If he/she really loves me, he will)
 - c. Practice overlooking small things.
4. Thankfulness and effective relationships must emanate from the core relationship.