

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Classes.....9 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Worship/Bible Study..5 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study..... 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 September 3, 2023

Have a Heart...A Merry One


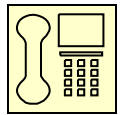

by Bryan Gibson

“A **merry heart** makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken...all the days of the afflicted are evil, but he who is of a **merry heart** has a continual feast...a **merry heart** does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones” (Proverbs 15:13, 15; 17:22). There’s no debating, then, the value of a merry heart.

That’s not to say that sadness is all bad, or that one should (or could) avoid it altogether. “Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, and the end of joy may be grief” (Proverbs 14:13). Albert Barnes, in commenting on this passage says, “Sorrow of some kind either mingles itself with outward joy, or follows hard upon it.” So it’s unavoidable, and it can also be quite helpful, even spiritually. “Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better” (Ecclesiastes 7:3).

To remain, though, in the depths of sorrow and discouragement can be hazardous to our souls, and the souls of others.

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Here are just a few reasons: 1) It's hard to stay busy doing good when we're discouraged—it "dries the bones" or saps our strength. 2) We're more vulnerable to false teachers, because they like to prey on the miserable. 3) We're also more vulnerable to the lusts of the flesh, looking for that "quick fix." 4) We're much more likely to cause strife among brethren, because in this state we tend to see everything in a negative light. 5) Our influence will be greatly diminished—no one likes to hang out with a joyless person, and they sure don't see us as someone to imitate. 6) For the same reasons, we may even turn some away from the truth.

So how do we maintain a merry heart, even in the midst of sorrow? Proverbs does more than commend the merry heart; it tells us how to keep it.

Find JOY in the truth, in the ways of the Lord—not in what "seems right" (14:12), but in what IS right. The satisfaction this brings to our souls just can't be replaced. "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied from above" (Proverbs 14:14). "The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he" (Proverbs 16:20).

ENJOY the fruits of our labors—in the physical realm ("he who tills his land will be satisfied with bread"—Proverbs 12:11), but especially the spiritual realm. "A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Proverbs 13:19), especially when that desire is to win souls (Proverbs 11:30).

Develop gratitude and contentment. "A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (27:7). We're not **entitled** to anything, so let's learn to be thankful for every "sweet" blessing—from the least to the greatest. "The leech has two daughters—Give and Give! There are three things that are never satisfied, four never say, 'Enough!' The grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not satisfied with water—and the fire never says, 'Enough!'" (Proverbs 30:15-16). Gratitude and contentment—we'll never be merry without them, and what's worse, we'll lose our souls.

Don't drink the poison of envy, which in some cases may be the source of our unhappiness. "A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones" (Proverbs 14:39). "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Romans 12:15)—that's the antidote to this crippling sin of envy, and one more key to a merry heart.

REJOICE in the hope of eternal life. "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:17-18). Can't escape sorrow here, but we can there, and that prospect will surely sustain us through whatever difficulties we face in this life.

Hard to find more fitting words with which to close: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

