

HE TRIED TO STEAL MY JOY!

GOD'S GOLDEN NUGGETS:

JOY, SIMPLICITY, AND CONTENTMENT

Part Two

In part one we discussed Joy; how to walk in the joy of the Lord and how we can share it with others. In part two, we will discuss simplicity and contentment. One of the ways that we achieve freedom is through simplicity in our lives; the second golden nugget. Remember, when God shows you something in your life that needs to be changed, He will also help you to accomplish it. He partners with you. We never fight the battles alone. He will never leave nor forsake us. He is our life partner.

The Holy Spirit spoke to my heart one day as I was praying the word, “Simplicity” and I thought, “Lord, I know I need things simpler in my life, but how do I do that?” God hears that question HOW a lot doesn't He? Yet we must remember that God's heart for His children's lives is to be simple, uncomplicated and full of joy. The heart and plans of Satan is totally the opposite. He wants our lives to become hard, twisted, and difficult to understand and often full of confusion. John 10:10 tells us that Satan came to steal—kill—and destroy. Satan uses the powers of darkness to complicate our lives. Complications are from Satan not God.

Who is the author of confusion? WHO? The Bible tells us that Satan is! 1 Corinthians 14:33 reads *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.* So here is an interesting thought—when we return to or are in the process of living the simple life and working to maintain simplicity—guess what—we are in spiritual warfare against Satan and the powers of darkness; we are warring against him; battle after battle. I am a firm believer that every Christians should be taught the *ins* and *outs* of Spiritual Warfare. Sad to say, many Christians do not have a clue of what Spiritual Warfare is or what it entails, and yet it touches our lives daily. There is no excuse for a Christian to be ignorant in this area as there are numerous books written on spiritual warfare and readily available to them; including my spiritual warfare manual which will be on the market in a few months.

Years ago, I came across a cartoon picture one day of two ladies standing over the devil. He appeared to be knocked out cold. Lying on the floor with stars floating around his head, the caption said, “*He tried to steal my joy!*” I cut it out and hung it up on my computer desk (where it still remains) as a reminder that spiritual warfare is a daily fact in our lives. The good news—in Jesus, we are the overcomers. We have a hefty *right hook* in the Lord and loaded with *God power!*

Ephesians is one of my favorite books in the Bible. It unfolds the process by which God is bringing the church to its destined purpose in Christ, and Paul prays that each Christian may know Christ's victorious fullness as we resist evil and face trials.

Satan hates simplicity because he knows the power, peace, and the joy it brings into our lives. Matthew 11: speaks of it this way. *Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* So, why do we struggle to let go? Why do we continue to carry them when we don't have to; knowing that Jesus is willing to take them from us? We have an out in Him. The answer—Go to Jesus—turn all the problems over to Him and find rest.

Do you want to remain restful and peaceful in your soul—mind—emotions and make wiser decisions? Go to Jesus. Talk to him, and then take the time to listen and learn from Him. Jesus is life's simple answer. Learn how He handled situations and responded to people. Then ask your heavenly Father to give you strength to follow His example.

We could make long lists with details, tips, hints, ways, and whatever to simplify our lives, but the list would be endless. The answer—the key—is learning to develop the habit of seeking and asking the Lord. *“Lord, what would you do in this situation?”* It almost sounds too easy doesn't it? But simplicity is what we are trying to achieve. And if we work together with the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent back to us—the Holy Spirit who lives in you—the Holy Spirit who is our Teacher, as well as our Comforter—the Holy Spirit who is our Helper, we will succeed because that is His job; and He does it well. I believe it grieves God's heart when we don't live in the fullness of life with love and joy abounding; for God is love. It is His very nature.

God says, *Seek My face daily—watch My plan for and in your life unfold. I'll show you what to do. You do not travel upon the “road of life” alone—we are with you—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* Now I ask you, *what better companions could you ask for? They will never leave you nor forsake you.* Yet, for most of us that isn't good enough because our human nature cries out for all the answers—like yesterday! We want to see the full picture from top to bottom and yet, only God sees, only He knows the full picture regarding our lives.

God works with us. He won't do everything for us or give us all the answers up front, but in every situation if you ask Him for help; He'll partner with you and show you step by step what you need to do. When you are following His ways, things will come out right, because in Him you are an overcomer?. Have you noticed that? Seek His face not the anointing. Seek His face, not the blessing. Seek His face and

let Him touch and work in your life right now, this very hour. Another battle may be just around the corner and God wants you prepared and fit for the conflict.

When we partner with God, we walk in joy and simplicity which brings contentment. Then we see another golden nugget—love—and it goes hand in hand with them. We need to walk in God's unique plan of love that He gave us. I may become irritated because I have to live with difficult people, but then I remember how disagreeable I have been—what a reality check! Often looking at other people is like looking into a mirror and seeing myself; not always a pleasant sight. Then I remember that God is love and his saving grace covers me.

The Holy Spirit reveals to me that God loves me not because I am lovable, but it is His nature to do so. And as His child, He looks not only on the outward behavior, but he looks inward as well. He sees my heart and how wonderfully He deals with me. The knowledge that God loves me beyond all limits helps me to see my faults, be willing make changes and compels me to go into the world to love others in the same way He loves me. Thus, we become the reflections of the Father's great love.

I want to walk so closely with the Lord Jesus that His life, His sweetness and His love will be continually poured out through me. Is that your desire? Neither natural love nor God's divine love will remain and grow in you unless it is nurtured. Without love operating in your life, you will not have joy and without joy it is difficult to love. Following God's guidelines will simplify your life so that you may enjoy each and every day, and enjoy life to the fullest. Don't settle for or be satisfied with less than the best God has for you. That is exactly what the enemy would like you to do; hence, we engage in spiritual warfare. Look for the opportunities in your life to receive the love, joy, and power of God. If you seek God's best, you will find them.

See *God's Golden Nuggets* on the archive page. As you read them, purpose in your heart to add them to your life—joy, simplicity, and love. Contentment is the third golden nugget. To have contentment—you have to experience God's joy—add simplicity and practice walking in them daily. Paul is telling us in Philippians 4:12 to learn to develop contentment in your soul over time and through experience. Learn as Paul did in Philippians 4:13 – *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*, for truly Christ is sufficient for all your needs. *He is the same yesterday, today and forever.*

I would like to leave you with THE ROAD OF LIFE story (See the Devotional Page) sent to me through the internet. I do not know the author so I am unable to give him/her credit; but may the story tied with the Joy teaching bless you with God's truth. Remember, you are an Overcomer in Christ Jesus now and forever; hang on and don't let go.