

Rejoice in the Lord!

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice!" To "rejoice in the Lord" is a command that is often overlooked. It is not optional, it is imperative. We cannot disregard this text and be true to the Lord. So, what is expected of us in this command? Consider three things.

First, Paul's command is a positive command ... "rejoice". Many people today are living in a negative state of discouragement, depression, and division due to sin. God wants us to be transformed from the negativity caused by sin to positivity caused by a godly life in the Lord.

Second, Paul's command is a particular command ... "in the Lord". Only those people who have been scripturally baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), who live faithfully each day (1 Corinthians 4:17), and who die faithfully (Revelation 14:13) are "in the Lord".

Third, Paul's command is a perpetual command ... "always". The joy of a Christian is not a moody, temperamental, or fickle emotion that comes and goes like the changing winds. Paul speaks of joy often in Philippians and his epistle was written while he was in a Roman prison!

Paul wants Christians to be positive, be particular, and be perpetual. Let's go out now and rejoice in the Lord always!
- Chris Reeves -

Sentence Sermons

- You can work without living, live without working, or work while living.
- God's people are not without trials and not without God during trials.
- Repentance begins with a humble heart and ends with a transformed life.
- How you get your money tells something about you and how you spend it tells even more.
- A soft answer turns away wrath.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Repentance: A Hard Command

Have you ever read your Bible and wondered about what God commands us to do today? Have you ever read some of those commands and thought about how hard they might be to obey? What would you consider to be a hard command in the Bible?

I can think of some hard commands. The command to love your enemy could be hard for some people (Matthew 5:44). The command to flee fornication could be hard for other people (1 Corinthians 6:18). The command to repent could be hard for many people (Acts 17:30).

I want to consider this last command to repent, but before I do, I want to remind us all that God's commands can indeed be obeyed. God's commands are not so hard and difficult that we cannot obey them. The Apostle John wrote: *"For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome"* (1 John 4:3). Yes, we can and must obey God's commandments!

Having said that, it is also true that for some people the command to repent is hard to obey. Why is that? It is hard for some people to repent because change is hard. People get comfortable living the way they want and they don't want to change. Let's learn some lessons

from the Bible that will help anyone fulfill the command to repent and change. Friend, you can repent if you really want to.

Three Requirements to Learn

We need to learn that there are requirements to repentance. Repentance is produced by godly sorrow (Matthew 26:75), repentance is a change of mind (Isaiah 55:6-7), and repentance is a reformation of life (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Repentance without a complete change of life is not repentance.

Three Mistakes to Avoid

We need to learn what repentance is not. Repentance is not simply saying "I'm sorry..." (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20), repentance is not simply stopping something for a short period of time (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; 26:20), and repentance is not simply admitting wrong and paying restitution (Matthew 27:3-5). Repentance is not just thoughts or words, but a complete change of life.

Three Reasons to Consider

We need to learn that there are important, eternal reasons to repent today. We must all repent to be saved from sin and hell (Mark 1:4; Lk. 3:3; 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 17:30-31; 2 Peter 3:9), we must all repent to enjoy an abundant life now (John 10:10; Acts 11:18), and we must all repent to restore purpose and usefulness to

our life (Luke 15:7,10,11-32; Revelation 2:5). Repentance, while hard, has very good reasons to be obeyed.

Three Obstacles to Overcome

We need to learn that the Devil will try to keep us from repenting by putting many obstacles in our way. Some do not repent because they are unaware they are sinners (Acts 3:17-19; 2 Timothy 2:25), some do not repent because they are proud and stubborn (Matthew 11:20-21; 12:41; 21:29,32; Romans 2:4-5; Hebrews 6:6), and some do not repent because they love their sin too much (Revelation 2:21; 9:20-21; 16:9,11).

Three Examples to Follow

We need to learn to follow Bible examples of repentance. The Pentecost crowd demonstrated a complete conviction of heart when they repented (Acts 2:37-38), the former sorcerer (Simon) demonstrated a complete sorrow for sin when he repented (Acts 8:22-24), and the Corinthians demonstrated a complete turn around from their sin when they repented. (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

Yes, repentance is a hard command for some to obey, but this hard command, like all of God's commands, will bring wonderful blessings now and in the future when obeyed. - Chris Reeves