

How Cheerfulness Changed a Boy's Outlook

Introduction

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Much of our personal happiness depends on how we look on the problems and perplexities of life. Looking at things through God's eyes always produces happiness and joy. When we are down and in a complaining mood, we need to take the time to refocus on our God, and see where our thinking is wrong. This is what John needed to do.

The Scripture

Read the Scripture to the group.

"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."
—Proverbs 15:13

A Real Life Example

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Who Cares?

John was sitting on the side of his bed with his head hung low. Just now he was complaining to his best friend, Joe, of how he did not want to go to church the next day. He did not really mind going to church, but he did not want to see the boys with whom he usually hung around. They were all going to go to a basketball camp for a week held each year on a college campus. His parents had not allowed him to attend. The college was secular, and after classes, the boys would be generally left on their own. His parents did not feel that it was wise to place John in such a situation. John could see their point, but a couple of the boys were making fun of him, and he was letting it bother him.

Joe tried to cheer him by saying, "Who cares what the guys think? Jim's parents don't care much about it. They are going to go for a vacation the same week and don't even mind that Jim is not going with them. Maybe the other parents do not see the same dangers that your parents see. At least, you know one thing. Your parents care about you, and they are trying to do right by you. Hey! If you don't want the guys to needle you, beat them at their own game! Don't let it bother you. Be cheerful. Be happy. Let them know you have other things to think about, so it is no big deal!"

"Yeah, you're right. I really don't even want to go that badly. My dad and I are going to go fishing next Thursday. Besides, if they laugh at me, what does that hurt? Nothing at all, I suppose. I can be thankful my parents do care about me. Even if those fellows do wrong, there is no reason for me to sin. I have plenty of reasons to be cheerful. I should put into practice the verse we learned last week, '*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the*

spirit is broken. ' I've been moping for nothing!"

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was John feeling down?
2. How did his friend, Joe, encourage him?
3. Explain how Joe helped John to see the situation differently.
4. We should always be cheerful; but name three reasons that John had for being cheerful.
5. How do you think John's cheerfulness will affect the other boys?
6. How do you think John's cheerfulness will affect his own happiness?
7. Explain whether Joe handled himself as a Christian should.
8. Explain how some other people might have acted in Joe's place.
9. How could John have really behaved better?

Conclusion and Resolution

Read the Scripture again. Read or explain the conclusion in your own words. Ask the group to suggest what specific changes that they can resolve to make in their daily lives that will help them to implement needed changes in this area. Ask them to especially consider things they have learned in the Bible to use as scriptural guideposts to a more competent and productive life.

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Being emotionally down or sad is common, but as Christians, when we feel that way, we should ask ourselves a few questions, such as "Why?" "Is this how God would want me to feel?" "How would God like me to look at the situation I am in?" All of the answers for our problems, and negative emotions too, are found in God's Word. Learn to look there first for encouragement and solutions to the problems of life. You won't be sorry.

Teacher's Notes
