

Joy.



Joy to the World

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;

While fields and floods, rocks,
hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.



Joy.

People try to find joy in many areas of life; relationships, work, money etc, however, true joy can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

John 15:5-11.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.....

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Joy is our strength.

Nehemiah 8:8-12.

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve.” Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.



Joy brings health, disobedience & stress brings sickness.

Proverbs 17:22.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Isaiah 58:8-14.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say:

Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always;

then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Joy brings health , disobedience & stress brings sickness.

Psalm 51:8-12.

*Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within
me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from
me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation.*

**“Restore unto me the joy
of thy salvation; and uphold me
with thy free spirit.”**

Psalms 51:12 (KJV)

Jews for Jesus 2016 (David Brickner).

As we start the year with fresh hope, it seems like the odds are stacked against us. According to a recent U.S. News & World Report study, eighty percent of New Year's resolutions are bound to fail.

- Even in light of that number, I'm not a cynic—I'm an optimist. But my hope is grounded in something more trustworthy and permanent than my own strength or circumstances.
- We will soon be inaugurating our new president. You may be one of those who are dismayed by the results of the election, or someone who is hopeful for the possibility for change. Our hope is not found in a new administration or a politician's promise. Our best hope is found in something that isn't new at all.
- This month, you will find our Jews for Jesus staff and volunteers in Washington, DC, at the inauguration festivities talking to people about the hope found in Jesus, the One who always was, always is and always will be.

Jews for Jesus 2016 (David Brickner).

- The prophet Jeremiah encouraged people who had experienced disappointment to live for God's promises. Israel had been taken forcibly into exile. Jeremiah wrote the best possible advice for a people who had experienced complete and utter devastation. He told them, "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace" ([Jeremiah 29:7](#)).
- We all are living in a type of exile because ultimately our truest home is with God. Yet God still wants us to live full of hope now and to live well, even in our exile, because ultimately we represent Him. Our exile may feel like a real sense of loss. Eventually life delivers disappointment to us on many different levels. It may be that we experience dysfunction in relationships that we still carry with us, and we may struggle with loneliness and alienation. Maybe things haven't turned out the way we hoped in terms of our career and we feel stuck. We have disappointed ourselves and others, and we have to fight a sense of being less than what we had hoped for ourselves.

Jews for Jesus 2016 (David Brickner).

- We find God's encouragement for us through the words of Jeremiah to Israel. The first word of hope is to live for today and don't let regret rob you of the joys that are still to be had here and now. Engage with people, engage with our culture and pray for it, be a part of our world and experience the joy that life has to offer us in our exile.
- The second word of hope is that we should live for His promises. James Hagerty, White House Press Secretary during Eisenhower's administration said, "...cheer up, things could get worse. So I cheered up, and sure enough, they got worse." This was Jeremiah's experience. Despite Jeremiah's faithfulness to proclaim a message of hope, he had to live to see the destruction of his own people and city and then was forcibly taken into captivity where he died. And yet in the midst of it all he was able to pen what are perhaps the most hopeful words in all of Scripture: "Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" ([Lamentations 3:22–23](#)).

Jews for Jesus 2016 (David Brickner).

- Because we are in exile, we cannot avoid pain and brokenness; we can, however, live hope-filled lives because God has promised us a much better tomorrow. We were made for much more than just this life—we have eternity in our hearts.
- Life on earth is temporal and what we think will make it perfect here doesn't satisfy us. It's because we are made for a permanence that is in God's presence, a love that only He can give and a joy that never fades. He is the only pleasure that is permanent; He is the only just, wise and loving ruler.
- As refugees and exiles, we are citizens of God's kingdom. We look forward with hope to the day when there is no more death, no more tears and no more pain—only the pure, rich and ever-satisfying love of God. That is our resolve and hope for the New Year and for all time.

Difference between joy and happiness.

We often tend to think of joy and happiness as the same thing, but they're not.

The apostle Paul had joy even in the midst of sufferings, whereas it would be hard to say that someone is happy in the midst of hardships.

2 Corinthians 7:4.

In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy

Ultimately joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.



Joy is a choice.

James 1:2-4.

Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Corinthians 12:10.

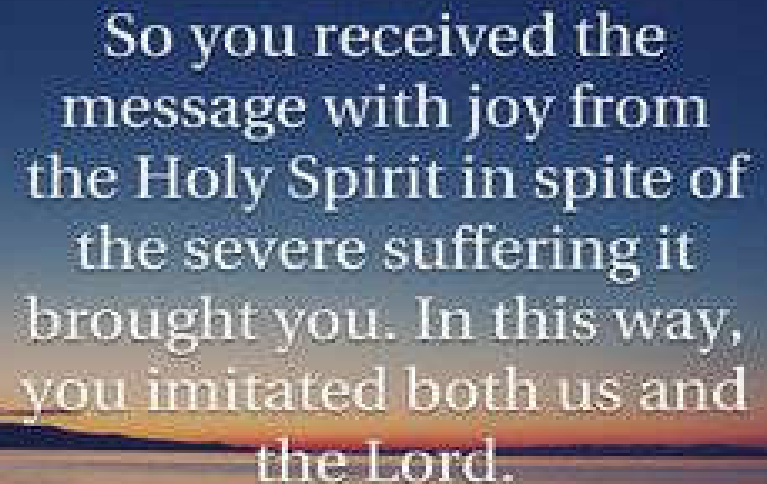
That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

choose
Joy

The road to perfection/maturity is one of trials and testing.

Bill and Gloria Gaither song

*I want just enough clouds in
my sky,
To make the beautiful sunset,
I want just enough tears in my
eyes,
To make the rainbow appear,
I want just enough heartaches
and sighs,
To fellowship in his suffering,
I want just enough rain,
Just enough pain,
To make me what he wants me
to be*



So you received the
message with joy from
the Holy Spirit in spite of
the severe suffering it
brought you. In this way,
you imitated both us and
the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 NLT

Joy is a choice.

Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things. Kay Warren

When all your fondest hopes and wildest dreams come true, and your heart nearly explodes with happiness, it's easy to feel joyful.

But what about the valleys? When nothing seems to go your way? When everything is falling apart? When God is silent, and you feel all alone? Where does joy fit in those moments?

In **Choose Joy**, acclaimed author and Christian leader Kay Warren shares the path to experiencing soul-satisfying joy no matter what you're going through.

Joy is deeper than happiness, lasts longer than excitement, and is more satisfying than pleasures and thrills. Joy is richer, fuller, and it's far more accessible than you're thought.

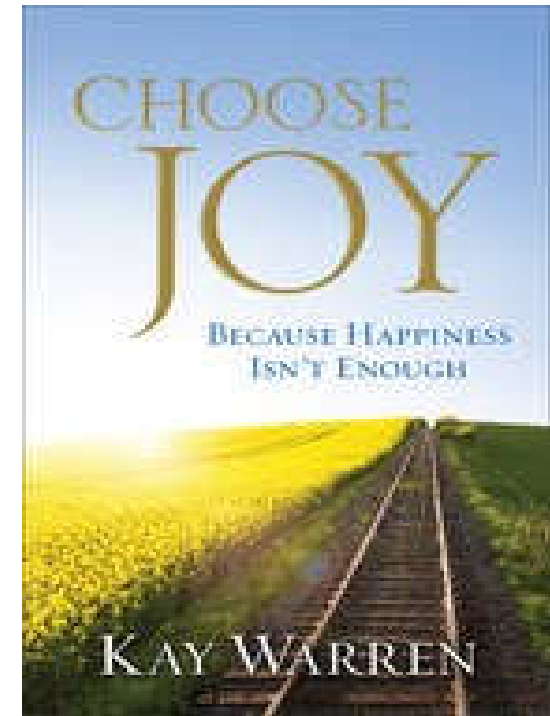
Joy comes from God...and it can be yours! Today.

Joy is a choice.

Kay Warren cofounded Saddleback Church with her husband, Rick Warren.

She is a passionate Bible teacher and tireless advocate for those living with mental illness, HIV&AIDS, and for orphaned and vulnerable children. She is a board member of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. She founded Saddleback's HIV&AIDS Initiative.

Kay is the author of *Sacred Privilege: Your Life and Ministry as a Pastor's Wife*, *Choose Joy: Because Happiness Isn't Enough*, *Say Yes to God*, and co-author of *Foundations*, the popular systematic theology course used by churches worldwide. Her children are Amy and Josh, and Matthew who is in heaven.



Joy is a choice.

Pastor Rick Warren shared for the first time intimate details of his son's suicide and his family's grief in what Piers Morgan called his most-inspiring interview ever.

"I have cried every single day since Matthew died," the megachurch pastor said on CNN Tuesday night. "But that's actually a good thing. Grief is a good thing. It's the way we get through the transitions of life." He choked up on camera, too. His wife, Kay Warren, wiped tears from his cheek as they talked about the five months since their 27-year-old son, who had borderline personality disorder, shot himself with a gun he bought illegally online.



Matthew's death, they said, came after years of threatening suicide and even asking his father, "Why can't I just die?"

Joy is a choice.

The Warrens combined personal moments from their story—Kay hugging her son's body as the coroner took it away, Rick reading sympathy letters from people who Matthew had led to Christ—with their advocacy for a more robust response to mental illness and their continued hope in God.

The author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Rick repeated that there's a purpose to their pain, affirming his belief in God even after "the day that I prayed would never happen happened." He said:

I never questioned my faith in God. I questioned God's plan. There's a big difference. I know God is a good God. ... But not everything that happens in the world is God's will. Everything that happens in the world God allows, he permits, because it couldn't happen without his permission.

But we live in a world where there are free choices, so if I choose to do wrong, I can't blame God for that. So God isn't to blame for my son's death. My son took his own life. It was his choice.

Joy is a choice.

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison.

Philippians 4:4-5.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



Joy is a choice.

Joy and rejoicing is a particular theme in the book of Philippians. Let's have a look at what Paul says there:

- **1:4:** Paul prays with joy for the Philippian Christians, because of their partnership with him in the gospel.
- **1:18:** Paul rejoices in the fact that the gospel is being proclaimed.
- **1:25:** Paul says that he will remain (i.e. live and not die) so that he can “*continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.*” Paul wants these Christians to grow in joy.
- **2:2:** Paul wants the Philippians to “*complete his joy*” by being united together.
- **2:17-18:** Even if Paul is facing death, he is “*glad and rejoice[s] with them all.*” In a similar way, Paul says that the Philippians should “*be glad and rejoice with [him]*” as he faces possible death.
- **2:28-29:** Paul is eager to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippians, that they may rejoice at seeing him again. So he tells them to receive him with “*all joy*”.

Joy is a choice.

- **3:1:** Paul tells the Philippians to “*rejoice in the Lord*”. In other words to rejoice is a command!
- **4:1:** Paul says that the Philippians church is his “*joy and his crown*”, that is, this church brings Paul joy.
- **4:4:** Again, Paul commands the Philippians to rejoice:
“*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice*”
- **4:10:** The Philippians church showed Paul concern when we was in need, and this led Paul to “*rejoice in the Lord greatly*”



Joy is a choice.

Habakkuk 3:17-18

*Though the fig tree
does not bud
and there are no
grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce
no food,
though there are no sheep
in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.*

Romans 12:12.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.



Habakkuk 3:18

**"yet I will rejoice
in the LORD,
I will be joyful in
God my Savior."**

Hope produces Righteousness, Peace and Joy.

Romans 14:17.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1 John 3:2-3.

But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Proverbs 10:28.

The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.

Romans 15:13.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

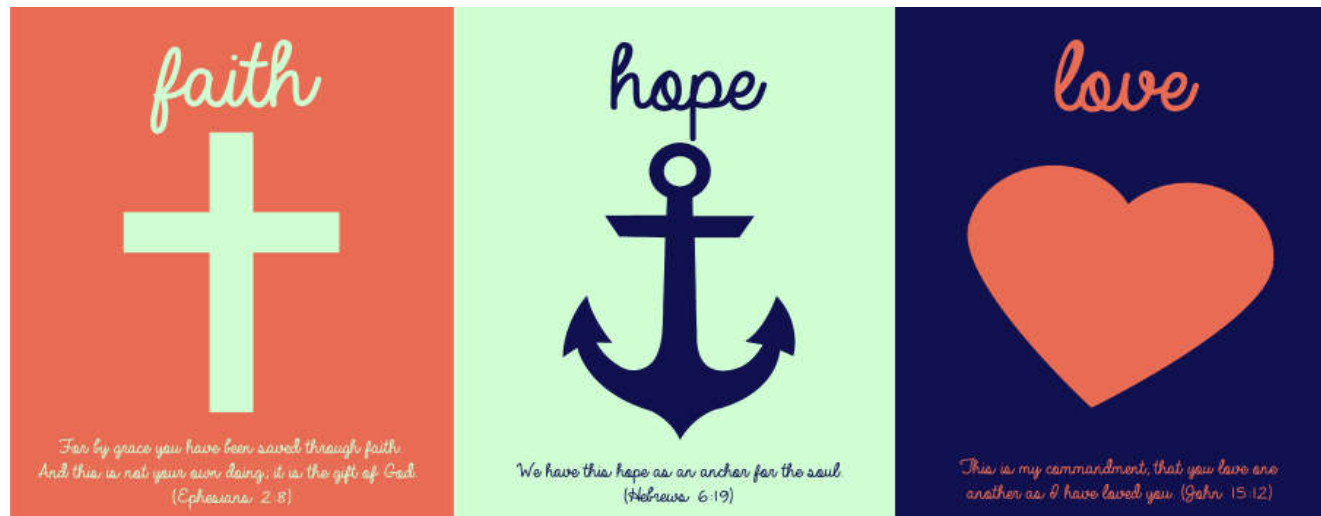
Hope produces Faith and Love.

1 Corinthians 13:13.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Colossians 1:3-5.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel.



Hope.

What is the Biblical definition of faith?

Hebrews 11:1.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Your faith can be defined by what you hope for, with that in mind ask yourself these questions:

1. What am I hoping for?
2. Do I have a desire to be holy?
3. What is my vision for the future?
4. Is my hope in man?
5. Is my hope focussed on God and His ability and resources?
6. Do I believe that God knows what is best for me?
7. Is what I have put my hope in worth sharing with others?

1. What are you hoping for?

Hebrews 11:1.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

There is no such thing as blind faith, hope is the eye of faith.

Faith is believing that the vision you have, what you have set your sights on, will become a reality.

Proverbs 29:18.

Where there is no vision, the people perish;

Hebrews 11:6-7.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

What are you doing in holy fear?

**CREATE A VISION
THAT MAKES YOU
WANNA JUMP OUT
OF BED IN THE
MORNING.**

2. Do you have a desire to be holy?

Are you happy with being lukewarm and carnal or do you have a desire to be Christ-like?

1 John 3:1-3.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Hebrews 12:14.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

How much effort are you putting into living a life of separation from the world and its influences and beating your body down, as Paul said he did to make it his slave?

3. What is your vision for the future?

Once we have spiritual sight we then have the choice of what to set our eyes on.

Hebrews 12:1-2.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame.



2 Corinthians 4:18.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

4. Is your hope in man.

Psalm 146:3-5.

Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.

Psalm 147:10-11.

His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Psalm 118:8 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."



5. Is your hope in God and His ability and resources

Psalm 33:13-22.

From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.



But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

6. Do you believe that God knows what is best for you?

Romans 8:28-39.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose....

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?



7. Is what you hope in worth sharing with others.

Ephesians 2:12-13.

remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 3:14-16.

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened. But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Being prepared is not just having the confidence to speak or knowing what to say, but having a life that is a good testimony.

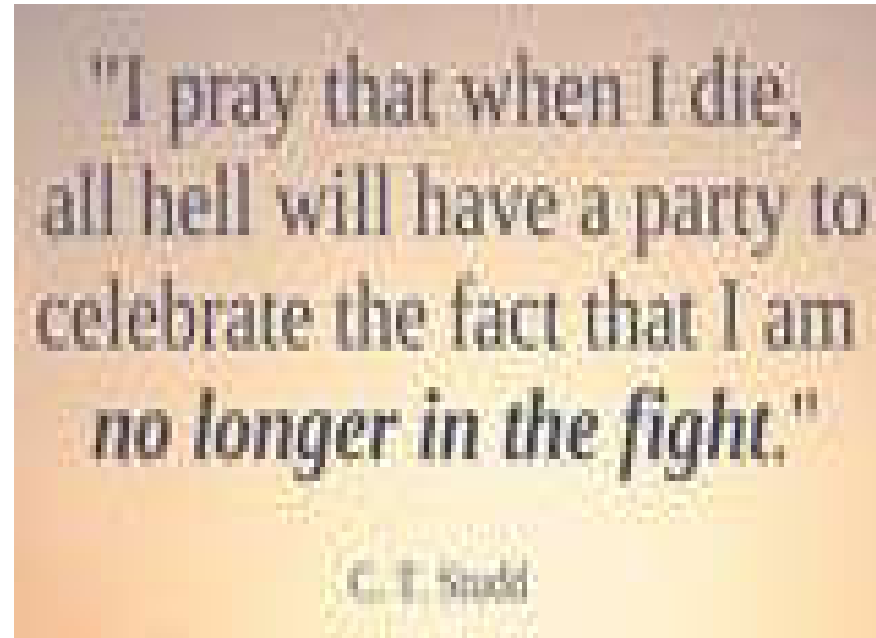
The atheist tract that inspired CT Studd.

After C. T. Studd had committed his life to Jesus, he came across a tract written by an atheist that made a radical impact on his life.

Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labour in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of Eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand, nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon Eternity alone, and on the Immortal Souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?

Is what you are living for worth dying for?

CT Studd was convinced that this atheist did, in fact, describe “the truly consistent life,” but when he looked at his own life, he saw “how inconsistent it had been.” And so he determined that, “from that time forth my life should be consistent, and I set myself to know what was God’s will for me.”



Studd gave his life for the poor and lost on the mission field, dying in Africa after years of faithful service. It was Studd who wrote, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

Are you living in the light of eternity? As Leonard Ravenhill often asked, “Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?”

The Angels rejoice in the Salvation of men.

We should rejoice too, in the Salvation of others and ourselves.

Luke 15:10.

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

1 Peter 1:8-9.

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Psalm 16:11 (KJV)

In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

As we go into 2018 may this be true of us too.

Psalm 119:111.

Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart..

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