

THE  
TRUTH  
ABOUT  
HAPPINESS

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Exchanging The Falsehood Of Happiness  
For Christ's Lasting Joy

By J.E. Berry

*Free Sample Chapter*

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References in the rear.

[www.JEBerrySpeaks.com](http://www.JEBerrySpeaks.com)

## Part 2

### It's A Heart Thing

Now that we've made some headway in our journey, let's take a step toward resolving some inner disturbances that stand in between us and our true joy.

The average heart beats 60-100 beats per minute and pumps 2.4 ounces of blood through our veins with every beat. Our hearts are considered the epicenter of our bodies. Our hearts are also the epicenter of our spiritual wellbeing. And, just like our physical hearts pumps blood through our bodies, our spiritual heart pumps elements of truth through us.

The heart tells everything. It spills out our secrets without us ever saying a word. It reveals itself through our actions, our choices, and our mouths. Though we spend many hours trying to cover up what really hides in our hearts, eventually, everything that flows through our hearts is revealed.

## **Guard Your Heart**

Our heart holds the keys to many occurrences in our human response to the circumstances around us. It spills out from our mouths and our hands. Our actions and the things we say are a direct reflection of the condition of our hearts. So, it makes perfect sense to protect that which has so much control. The thought of guarding your heart can appear like a simple external practice. However, many of us don't even recognize that we have left our hearts wide open. I mean, most people don't intentionally open their lives to heartache, trials, suffering, and evil. The majority of humans go through life with the assumption that they are doing the best they can.

We make relationships with people and really don't think past the surface of it or of the spiritual attachments that we are making. We engage sin through all of our senses. In our entertainment and activities, letting the wrong someone get too close or befriending someone who leads a not so holy life and begin to walk the wide path with them. Then, we assume that we are ok because we have a "relationship" with Christ not realizing that we are still accountable for the actions that we have participated in. We totally miss the mark as we carry on in our blatant disobedience or complacency.

Our unguarded heart allows us to be persuaded and blinded. Leading us to be deaf to the voice of the Spirit, therefore, inviting compromise and conformity. An unguarded heart is a misled heart. As heirs to the Kingdom of God, The Spirit of God is our guide, but

we can't hear the Spirit if we have other voices speaking to our hearts. *"For those who are led by the spirit of God, are the children of God."* Romans 8:14 NIV

So, if we are true children of God and we have given our hearts over to Christ, why are we sometimes so careless with His heart? Why is it easier for us to put a fence around the homes we live in than around the home that Jesus lives in? Maybe it's because we don't have a realistic grasp on what it means for Christ to be alive in us. Truly, I believe that if we could really get the visual of what it looks like for Jesus to be living in our hearts and keep it, we would do a much better job at allowing God to create in us a clean heart and putting up a secure fence around His home.

Keeping boundaries around our hearts/minds is exactly what it takes to prevent temptation from becoming sin. *"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."* Proverbs 4:23 NLT. We must be mindful of the company we keep and the type of influences we give access to our hearts. We have a responsibility to be careful to keep the Lord's home clean and ready to use. Not to say that we should totally cut people or some things off. However we should be mindful if what we are engaging in brings any glory to God as well as if our boundaries are going to be weakened by what we are doing. For example, if you watch a movie with a lot of foul language and then you notice that you have begun to say a curse word here and there, chances are your mind

has been infiltrated a bit. You've allowed yourself to receive those words and now you have to try and figure out how to get rid of what you have let in. Now the living room of the Lord's home is a little messy.

Guarding the heart is of the utmost importance because everything that we do is a result of what our heart contains. *“For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.”* Matthew 15:19 NLT. Protecting your heart is stopping damage before it can wreak havoc on your life. Putting standards in place so that you won't even have to worry about the trouble of being enticed to do wrong is wise and rewarding.

My challenge for all of us: this week, be mindful of our surroundings. Let's rethink our “heart boundaries.” Then, let's ask ourselves, “Where is there a gap in the fence of our heart?” This is a challenge that is one of the most important and revealing. Take the time to pray and seek the Lord for discernment and guidance.

### **No Weapons Shall Prevail**

**Defeated:** having suffered defeat; beaten.

Unfortunately, we humans are bombarded by a variety of joy depleting feelings. The feeling of being defeated and/or discouraged is quite the quick happiness zapper. The feeling usually sets in when we

feel like life isn't going in the direction we anticipated. Or, simply when life hands us lemons. I know in my case, I have wallowed in defeat when the chips were down many times. When the walls are caving in around you, it's quite the feat to see the truth of where you stand. Fortunately, for the children of God, there is no defeat for those who trust in Him. Defeat is only a word that exists in your life if you allow it to. Our happiness can only fully take shape when we understand the concept that we always have the victory, because for Christ's followers all things work together for the good (Romans 8:28).

The enemy can only penetrate our barricades of faith if we let him. Our trust and faith in the Lord is our defense against all opposition. *"If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you."* Isaiah 54:15 NIV. With this truth, we should wallow in the joy that we have been given rather than the defeat that was thrown at us.

Our God is the creator of all. *"See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc;"* Isaiah 54:16 NIV. Though it may seem like all the arrows are pointed at you, the truth is that our Lord has already redirected the arrows and we are in the clear. No matter what it looks like, we have the victory. Defeat is only a six letter word not the judgment upon us. Only when you receive defeat, are you defeated.

We have access to a heritage of victory transferred to us through Christ Jesus. The Word is our sword of truth against all evil that comes against us and the Lord ensures that even the bad circumstances work in our favor. *“no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord.*” Isaiah 54:17 NIV. Our lemons are always made into lemonade. Though it can seem like we are just holding lots of lemons, the Lord holds the pitcher (us) ready for the making. Every trial is a lemon being squeezed adding more juice to your pitcher and, when you’ve gone through all your lemons, God stirs it all up, adds sugar (rewards) and we get our lemonade, us in the will of God.

Study Verse- Isaiah 54:10, 17 NIV

*10“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you. “*

*17“no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord.”*

## **Finding Refuge in Him**

In the past, I have been a victim of anxiety. Anyone who has ever dealt with anxiety can totally relate when I say that it brings some of the most out of control emotional and physical symptoms. You almost feel trapped in your own body while all of your insides are trying to escape. Even worse, you feel like everyone thinks you're crazy and you kind of feel that way. In an instant, it can make you feel totally alone in a room full of people.

You know how it is when you are going through something and you feel like there is no one around to talk to. You feel totally alone in the situation, like no one understands or cares how you feel. This feeling of isolation and bondage is a horrible place to be. Making us feel completely out of control. These situations make us vulnerable, causing a haze to come between our common sense and our situation. In these moments our feelings can cause us to make hasty decisions in the wrong direction and lead us to rely on human survival instinct. We get panicked and run to the nearest human who seems like they can help us. We get some great advice (hopefully) and then try to figure out what we can do to solve our dilemma. All this, for us to still be worked up by the end of it all and often more confused than before we started.

Fortunately for us, there is someone who is just waiting for us to come running to Him looking for comfort and refuge. His name is.... God! He is always there, even when we feel alone. *"I know the Lord is*

*always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.*" Psalm 16:8 NLT. He knows what we are going through and how we feel. The Lord has been through every hardship. He has been hungry, betrayed, beaten, laughed at, abandoned, you name it. He has been through it all and has overcome it all. Even on our behalf.

Not only is He with us all the time but He protects us as well. If we let Him, we can avoid a lot of harm. "*You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope.*" Psalm 119:114 NLT. The last thing I'm sure He wants to see is His children suffering when He is trying so hard to keep them from the devil's grasp. The enemy is doing everything in his power to keep us from the safety of God's umbrella. The devil gets into your head and tells you everything you do or don't want to hear to draw you away. When you are going through a rough patch is when you are most vulnerable but those are the times when you need to cling tight to the Lord and the Word. You will find strength in both because even though the surroundings don't look so good, God is using this time to build you up and prepare you for what He has called you for while the enemy is doing His best to make you feel alone and forgotten.

Joy lies in the one who gives it. Our heavenly Father. There is no refuge in this world for those of us who are not of this world. Stop looking around you and start looking above for your help. "*We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.*" Psalm 33:20 NIV.

Study Verse- Psalm 34:8 NLT

*“Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!”*

### **Time With Your Father**

Wading through the waters of life, can occasionally feel like you're fighting for your life in an alligator filled Louisiana swamp. You feel like you are just barely surviving and there is no time for anything else but looking ahead to achieve the next task. We get into our “schedules” and make our own “plans,” and figure as long as we can get to evening time we have done it and then it starts all over again the next day.

With the lives that most of us lead, it can seem hard to find time to take a breath let alone make time to sit in quiet and have a good time of prayer. However, as impossible as it seems, it is a good contributor to lasting joy. Not to mention the most important factor, a healthy relationship with your Savior, Father, and Friend. After all, we could all use a good friend to talk to who won't repeat what we have said to someone else, or remind us of what we have done in the past. What better friend than Jesus? He already knows everything about us. Even the things that we have never told a soul and He still wants us. Not to mention that He has the solutions to our problems. He's pretty much the best friend you ever have, if you allow Him to come in and be that for you. The title of your time

blesses the remainder of your time. Your days are easier to deal with and you will find that God's peace rest in you more noticeably.

The Lord is just waiting for us to turn and face Him to commune with Him. It is one of His greatest joys. *"The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but he delights in the prayers of the upright."* Proverbs 15:8 NLT. He loves for His children to run into His arms and tell Him all about how they feel or what they want, or need. And just as much as He enjoys hearing our prayers, He enjoys answering them, *"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."* Matthew 7:7 NLT. Not to mention that He holds all the treasures of the world and heaven in His hands. He wants to bless us and He wants us to give us His joy. *"So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him."* Matthew 7:11 NLT. What more could you want in a friend? I'm pretty sure that none of our friends listed on social media can do any of these things for us.

Our prayer time is an escape from the world around us as we enter into the throne room of Christ. We have the full attention of the God of the universe. Coming into His courts and laying our burdens at His feet brings freedom and peace. You can go straight to the Father and lay all your worries at His feet and leave them there for Him to take care of. When you lay them down and don't pick them back up. Once you have

prayed about something, leave it alone. If you are going to still worry about it, you might as well not pray about it because your worry says that you don't have faith that God is going to take care of it. Just as you don't take your money to the bank teller and then turn around and leave with the same money you came in with. You make a deposit and walk out. That is exactly what you should do with your burdens. Take it to God in prayer and deposit it, then walk away from it.

Our intimate dialogue with God is very important. Equally important is learning to just sit in His presence and listen for His voice. Inviting Him into your space and then just sitting with Him without saying a word. This creates a welcoming space for His Spirit to enter in undisturbed.

Here's a challenge. Keep a prayer journal. Write what you pray about every day. When you pray, Praise Him for the greatness of who He is and thank the Lord for what He has done for you. Then, you pray for others and for yourself. Always be thankful in your prayers! He has already done so much for us. When you receive the answer to your prayer, whether it's the answer you want or not, write it down. This will get you in the practice of making prayer time a habit. Remember, what may seem like a no answer is still an answer. Sometimes we think we are not getting what we asked for, when He may be saying, "I have something better," or "not right now." He loves you and will protect you if something you want may not be

good for you or the will He has for your life in the grand scheme of things. He's a good Father!

Study Verse - Colossians 4:2 NLT

*“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”*