

This guide is intended to be used as a complement to my podcast “Another Beautiful Life.” It is best utilized after listening to the corresponding episode. Please take some time to be contemplative in your answers. My suggestion is to ask the Holy Spirit to lead you through it before you begin. I’m already praying you hear His voice clearly.

**Episode 112 - Joy: Better Than Happy Revisited**

If you’ve experienced any form of loss, you may be experiencing grief such that you feel the weight of what might best be described as melancholy this Christmas.

Temporary melancholy within a balanced life of all emotions can serve as a good thing. After all, we don’t know highs without the lows. We don’t know the beauty of what we have without the contrast of loss, right? Feeling melancholy reminds us that somewhere at some time we have experienced hope and a light heartedness and even happiness. Melancholy is just one of hundreds of emotions or feelings available to us in this human experience — it’s not a disorder.

1. How would you describe your emotions right now surrounding the holiday season? (If it’s helpful, look at a “Feelings Wheel” to identify your emotions. You can download one online.)

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As long as we are moving forward through our emotions - processing them - it can be a powerful tool to appreciate the now or present aspects of life. Again, processing just means that you are noticing, allowing, and attending to your emotions. You are not acting out, resisting or stuffing them down.

1. How have you been handling each of the emotions that have come up for you recently? What have you been doing?

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There is a difference between having joy and feeling happy. Happiness is an emotion that ebbs and flows with our experiences of our circumstances. It is directly related to external things. And more directly, with our thoughts about those external things. It’s our thoughts that are creating an experience or an environment for us to feel happy about something or not.

But joy always with us, regardless of how happy we feel in the moment. In fact, joy is most realized when we aren’t feeling happy - when we’re feeling sad, or broken, or ripped apart by this life. It helps remind us of all that’s good and most important in our lives. It keeps us grounded to what is true, and honorable, and right. It brings us back to God’s love that is better than life. Better than anything we could ever define, desire, or chase after. In the midst of the unbearable circumstances of life, we can still feel joy, deep down inside.

1. What is it that you want to feel right now? Is it “happy” or “joy”? Or both? And why?

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As a believer, joy is already given to you. Joy is due to the deep, internal, spiritual connection we have with God upon salvation. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full,” John 15:11.

Joy is something deep-seated. It’s planted in your soul and spirit. A seed that for sure can grow. But it’s there, nonetheless, and cannot be removed. You already have it!

1. What does it mean to you to understand that you already have joy inside you that cannot be removed by external factors?

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You can have MORE joy all the time regardless of what’s going on around you. The deep-seated joy in you can grow! Psalm 16:11 says that in God’s presence there is fullness of joy. Proverbs 10:28 says the hope of the righteous shall be joy. The Hope of the righteous is our salvation in Jesus Christ, and this shall be our joy. Our joy grows and permeates our being when we are pursuing God’s heart, making time to be in His presence, surrendering ourselves before Him in humility, and determining our daily purpose to know and love Him more. That’s how we have joy in all things.

1. What can you do to bring more joy into your life?

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Friend, if you’d like some help navigating out of melancholy (or whatever emotion you’re stuck in) and into joy, I’d love to be your Life Coach. Feel free to email me at: coaching@triciazody.com.

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