

SPIRIT in ACTION

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HAPPIER LIVING THROUGH THE BEATTITUDES

By Clifton W. King and Russell T. Williams
—Originally published © 1977, DSFI has offered this
book in a serial presentation over the past few months.
Installment 3 of 3

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE

*"Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God."
Matthew 5:8 (Jerusalem Bible)*

The growth of your God-centered philosophy is moving you into new dimensions of your mind. Knowing the Power Source has become a centering point for your daily study, reflection, and application of each Beatitude.

The sixth Beatitude is that which helps you practice and get-in-touch with the Power Source throughout every part of your day. It might be labeled: "practicing the presence" of the Power Source, God, in you. With daily practice, your God centered philosophy takes another step in its evolution. Each day, your

philosophy becomes a twenty-four hour walk with the Spirit of God in you.

"Happy the pure in heart." To allow your thoughts to flow with the intent of these words, consider this object lesson: Undoubtedly you have observed the hub of a wheel as it is in motion. You may have observed it while watching a bicyclist. Or perhaps you went to a parade and saw an old Conestoga wagon with its large wooden-spoked wheels. Maybe you have viewed the hub of an automobile wheel while driving in traffic. What is the nature of the hub of a wheel in motion? The hub is the center point from which all movement flows. Moving from the wheel's hub toward its circumference, greater motion and activity can be observed. The circumference of a wheel picks up much of the foreign matter and debris. It takes great wear and abuse because it experiences direct contact with the road surface. In inclement weather, interior portions of the wheel pick up extraneous dirt and mud, hiding the real appearance of the wheel. At the hub, however, there is protection from these elements. Capped or protected, the hub remains unblemished from the outer conditions of the wheel. The unblemished hub also has one very unique quality. At its center point, there is absolute, consistent strength. From this point,

all movement is initiated. It is the point of power around which all other parts of the wheel move. Without such a point of strength, the wheel would wear improperly, becoming out-of-balance and in turn causing every movement of the wheel to weaken its entire physical structure.

Your mind is like the wheel. It has a center point, the Spirit of God. Your conscious mind is like the circumference or rim of the wheel. It takes the initial contact with your daily experiences. The interior of the wheel is like your great preconscious mind which records and documents every experience you have.

In the sixth Beatitude, you can draw upon this analogy to grasp the intent of the words, "pure in heart." In the days of Jesus' ministry, the word, heart, was understood to be that place within us where all emotion resides. In those times, it was believed that the muscular organ, the heart, was the physical place from which all emotions came. Today, through modern science and psychology, we know that the seat of the emotions is one of the levels of our mind, the preconscious mind. Within the preconscious mind, we carry a lifetime collection of "photo albums" which have within them the recorded, classified, and stored information of our life. We use these photo albums daily. Some of our pictures of the past are used more often than others. Some stay hidden from us. But together they represent our life story. We are constantly drawing upon them to tell us who we are.

A great portion of what you carry around in your preconscious mind is flawed; blemished perceptions of yourself. In your study of the third Beatitude on mourning, you discovered how you must get in touch with these negative perceptions of yourself and free yourself from their crippling effect upon your emotional well-being. When you mourn these experiences, you actually release the worn, distorted, untrue attitudes and feelings about yourself. The preconscious mind experiences cleansing in the process of mourning.

Using the analogy of the photo albums within you, in this process of mourning, the preconscious mind receives a replacement picture, a true perception of the real you. The preconscious mind receives a new beautiful input fed to it by your indwelling Spirit of God.

This new, unflawed, pure input of Truth fed from the God-self of you into your seat of emotions, the preconscious mind, can find its Scriptural basis in the verse, "Where two or more gather in my name, there am I also." Moving your awareness in this Scripture beyond the literal translation of two or more persons gathering together, you can discover that Jesus is revealing, from a psychological standpoint, that when two or more levels of the mind gather together, in one accord, the Spirit of God is present. In this Beatitude the pure in heart consciousness is the merging of the Spirit of God with your preconscious mind.

It is important for you to know as a student of this Beatitude, that the merging of the Spirit of God within your preconscious mind can and must take place many, many times. Why? Just like the wheel that gathers dirt and debris in its travels, so you have filled many picture albums in your preconscious mind with untrue impressions of yourself. With the third Beatitude you replace the old, blemished impressions. The sixth Beatitude, practicing the presence of the Power Source, reveals that right now within you, with whatever negative emotional pictures you carry, you can touch the uncontaminated, flawless Truth of you.

As with each of the Beatitudes, you must work it daily if it is to work for you in your God-centered philosophy. Of all the tools available in practicing the presence of the Power Source, there is no greater tool than your Two-Way Prayer. In the stillness as you gaze tranquilly out upon the open sea, you quiet your mind from all outside distraction. As your physical body responds to this quieting of the mind, you become consciously receptive to the Spirit of God within you. As Jesus appears on the beach, you are lifted up into the presence of the Power Source. In these moments your preconscious mind merges with your inner God-self and, instantly, in the timeless Now, you experience purity of heart.

And the result of this merger of the preconscious mind with the Spirit of God? The result is that you shall see God. Your daily practice of the presence of the Power Source will open you to see with an inner eye. With this inner eye you shall see your true nature: The Power Source within you. With this new spiritual awareness, you will know and see that all is God. In every experience and person you meet,

there you see God in fullness. The difference within your awareness as you constantly expose yourself to the pure in heart presence, might be likened to viewing the stained glass windows at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France. Looking from the outside you see only grey. Pigeons huddle around the stone encasements of the windows. You question the beauty of the glass. You wonder why you have traveled to see them. And then you go inside. From within the sanctuary you look up and around you. Where there was grey outside, there are now rich, deep purples, blues, and reds fed by the slightest light. You marvel at the windows symmetry; you gaze at their matchless beauty. You feel the craftsmanship of the glass. You feel humble.

In seeing God, your entire being is transformed. Your perspective on life is as drastically changed as would be your going inside to view the cathedral windows. The world is made over in your mind. It is full of beauty; it speaks of unity; it moves within you as harmony and order.

This day reveals to you the rich intent of the sixth Beatitude in your life. "Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God." **HAPPY ARE YOU AS YOU DAILY PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD WITHIN: YOU SHALL SEE GOD.** Filled with new perceptions of yourself, you simply allow the Spirit of God to merge into your preconscious mind. In this merger your inner eye is awakened to the knowledge that in all things there is God. You feel comfortable and relaxed with this new awareness. The Spirit of God within you is now your hub. From this point of strength, you go forth to live joyously in your surroundings.

AFFIRMATION:

WITH GOD'S HELP THIS DAY, I ALIGN MYSELF WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD WITHIN ME.

YOUR AFFIRMATION

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE

"Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called the sons of God." Matthew 5:9 (Jerusalem Bible)

The theme of peace is a reoccurring one throughout the Nazarene's public ministry. And certainly in the political strife that characterized that part of the world for hundreds of years before Him. Jesus and his followers were familiar with the worldly interpretation of peace.

Today in our world, the theme of world peace is a familiar one and yet, like two-thousand years ago, the need for understanding the peace that Jesus revealed is no less significant and timely for you in strengthening your God-centered philosophy of life than it was for the people in His day.

Like so many of the terms Jesus employed to reveal Truth, the word, peace, was chosen with clear spiritual intent to define an attitude of mind that we are to apply in daily life in order to achieve union with God. The book of John in the New Testament reveals Jesus' message of peace. Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give unto you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you." Jesus is speaking of a possession He has. It is a spiritual possession that lives within Him as an attitude. This attitude of mind, peace, is free from hostility, jealousy, and resentment. In the teachings of the Essenes, a quiet religious sect existing during the days of Jesus' ministry, the word peace was defined as, "being in harmony with all the powers and forces around us."

To understand the idea of being "in harmony with," take a short visual trip in words to the beach. At the water's edge, sit quietly. You are the only person on the sand. It is damp and cold. The wind swirls about, passing through the windbreaker you wear. As you sit and gaze at the turbulent seas, a seagull comes into your field of vision two hundred yards down shore. Silhouetted against the threatening dark skies, the gull stands in striking white contrast. As you watch the gull travel toward you, you are intrigued by the pace of its flight. The unpredictable winds challenge its flight. But it journeys steadfastly. Its natural instincts are in harmony with the conditions it faces. With seeming effortless action, the gull moves toward you, using each wing stroke to advantage. Fluid, graceful, at ease in the

elements, the gull reaches its destination very near you and lights in the moist sand only a few yards from the hard-hitting breakers. You marvel at the gull's serenity as it stands poised. It is calm and at peace.

Like the gull that travels serenely in all conditions, the spiritual concept of peace, as understood and revealed by Jesus, is an attitude of mind available to you as a gift from God. Peace is the gift that unites you in harmony with all experiences. It is God's grace applied to all conditions of adversity.

"Happy the peacemakers." You are a peacemaker. You are a peacemaker as you bring forth into every experience the serenity which the Spirit of God provides within you. A peacemaker is one who serves the peace, first in mind and then in action. As a peacemaker, you must pass the peace from your inner awareness into every nook and cranny of your daily life.

Consider this life story of a five-year old girl who knew her spiritual possession of peace and, in knowing it, served her peacemaker role by passing her awareness of inner harmony with all things to another little child who had not discovered this Truth within herself.

Little Renee was on the playground skipping rope on a brisk, cool morning. She was feeling very invigorated and alive as she jumped in place, singing a soft song to the rhythmic beat of the rope against the pavement. She looked up from the ground to see her friend, Diane, come toward her with a jumping rope in hand. Just as Diane arrived, Renee glanced at the mountains. Tall and majestic, clearly visible in the morning sunlight, they seemed to reach out and call to her. Filled with the feelings of the moment, curly-haired Renee addressed Diane, "Gee, look at the mountains; and they're all mine." Diane, frowning, and looking angrily at Renee, said, "You don't own those mountains." Renee smiled and holding her rope to continue skipping, replied, "Oh, yes I do. But I promise I'll share them with you."

In this delightful anecdote, you can discover the three actions you take as a peacemaker. First, you reconcile yourself to God. In reconciliation the peacemaker knows that God is all. God, the Power Source, is in everything. The Power Source is constantly expressed in you as you align yourself with it

through the Spirit of God in you. Secondly, the peacemaker prevents. You prevent your attitude of peace being ruffled or replaced by attitudes of hostility, resentment, or jealousy toward your outer world. Like the lesson of the pure in heart in the sixth Beatitude, you take time in your day to allow an unceasing prayer of harmony, order and calmness to merge among the levels of your mind. Your mind, flowing in the smooth, tranquil seas of your inner Spirit of God, becomes centered and at peace with all life conditions. Thirdly, and as a result of reconciliation and prevention, the peacemaker expresses the peace...you pass the peace. In your home life, in your work, in your relationships with people and situations, you send forth from within you, your inner peace. You cannot hold the peace you feel. It is your required service as a spiritual being to share the peace you know inside you. Through your mannerisms, you touch every part of your environment with unconditional acceptance of all things.

As peacemaker you shall be called a son or daughter of God. When you are called, you are labeled. In the professions you are known by the title you hold. In the many roles you play daily, you are identified by the actions you perform in your roles.

As a son or daughter of God you are identified with a spiritual family. God, the Creator and Power Source, is the head of your spiritual household. The Spirit of God within you is your Sonship with the Power Source. You are one in spirit with the Power Source. As Jesus knew His identification with this Source of all, so you, as a spiritual being, have a Divine heritage. Paul expressed this when he said, "We shall be called heirs with God and co-heirs with our elder brother, Christ."

What is to be your experience as the son or daughter of God? Because you are in harmony with all the powers and forces in your environment, you do not experience separation from God. You are set free from the crippling emotions of hostility, resentment, and jealousy. You are released from limiting attitudes. As a spiritual heir to the fullness of God, you know and live your life in happiness and joy. The sons and daughters of God are filled with the rich knowledge that Spirit is all and is through all. Like a flower traveling through its phases of budding, blooming, and decay, you know, as a

Son of God, that you travel through life conditions that are always changing, but the Spirit of God in you is eternally fresh, alive, and vital.

Today you are a peacemaker for you know that, "Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called the sons of God." SERENE AND POISED ARE YOU IN THE ESSENTIAL HARMONY OF ALL LIFE. Freed from limiting attitudes and emotions, you touch the Spirit of God daily through an unceasing prayer that proclaims the Power Source is within you. As harmony is within, so it is in your experiences. In passing the peace that is within you, you are called forth into your spiritual home, where you live in the Divine Light of God's love.

AFFIRMATION:

WITH GOD'S HELP THIS DAY, I AM POISED AND IN HARMONY WITH ALL OF LIFE.

YOUR AFFIRMATION

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE

"Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:10 (Jerusalem Bible)

Just as the first Beatitude, by necessity, occupies top positions among the eight, so does this Beatitude find its appropriate placement at the end of Jesus' eight attitude lessons.

Its spiritual lesson signals both completion and continuation in the unfoldment of your philosophy. With the completion of the series, it focuses your attention on the one attitude of mind that you must constantly apply to all of the others in order to fulfill your goal of creating a God-centered philosophy of life. This tremendously important attitude is the attitude of persistence. Without this building block in your philosophy, you travel in spiritual sputters and spurts rather than in consistent, steady movement.

"Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right." When you read the word, persecuted, you may want to turn and run from

the Beatitude. When you think of persecution, your mind races toward thoughts of suffering, hurt, and pain. Because it is a law of human behavior, the law of economy, that you don't exert more effort than is required to accomplish a task, you view persecution as an extreme price to pay for your exerted effort.

In truth, the origins of the word, persecuted, is found in the word, pursue. Replacing it in the Beatitude phrasing, you find, "Happy those who pursue the cause of right." If you pursue something, whether it is a profession, a hobby, or a talent, you invest yourself in it. You go after what you want. You realize that every challenge, every adverse condition, every disappointment you face in the pursuit of your goal is just one more hurdle you have passed toward the attainment of your goal.

It matters not what activity you think of, those who persist through adversity, prevail. Those who pay the price, triumph. Those who hold fast to their dreams, realize them.

The great American, William O. Douglas, was one who understood the attitude of persistence. As a young boy he suffered a terrible fever which left his legs feeble. For months he lay in bed, unable to walk. Daily his mother spent hours applying soothing ointment to his legs to return the vital circulation necessary for walking. It was months before he walked. And when he did, it was with great uncertainty.

One day, frail and weak, he traveled to school. He wore stockings on his legs to protect them from the cold conditions. As he walked with a friend, a group of older boys came up to William and began chiding him about his skinny legs. Humiliated, William ran home.

On that day, at age nine, William Douglas determined that one day his legs would be strong and healthy. He knew it would take work but he was willing to pay the price. Near his hometown there was a mountain. He decided that he would strengthen his legs by climbing the mountain. It was months before he could walk to the top of the mountain without stopping. After walking to the top, he set his next goal: jogging to the top. After jogging, he ran to the top; and after that, he ran to the top again, backwards! This conditioning took years. But with persistence, which often knew pain and hurt, young William reached his goal by

high school. During his high school years, his strong legs and well conditioned body carried him to athletic honors in every major sport. He paid the price of pursuing his goal. He realized that he could not obtain it without investment.

What does the eighth Beatitude reveal that you must pursue? You must pursue the cause of right. As explained in the fourth Beatitude, the cause of right is your right thoughts and actions. What are the right thoughts and actions for you? They are those attitudes of mind which put you in harmony with God. The Spirit of God in you is the harmonizing agent from which all your God-centered attitudes emerge. You must center yourself in the presence of your inner Spirit of God. You must pursue this with the same dedication that you would in daily feeding and clothing your body.

When you pursue your goal of centering your life in the Spirit of God, you do face challenges. You simply do not attain this spiritual goal without work. Why? Firmly within your preconscious mind are the many photo albums which hold the record of false, scarred impressions of the real you. You cannot replace these photos with new, God-centered impressions without some remarkable and sometimes harsh battles in your life. When you begin to renew the preconscious mind with new pictures in the form of new attitudes about self, you discover that every time you face a situation that calls upon your use of a new God-centered attitude, your lingering old attitude fights for recognition in your conscious mind. The battleground is in the conscious mind. Does the Spirit of God prevail or does the will of self prevail? Daily you move from life experience to life experience. Daily the will of self confronts the Spirit of God within you. In releasing yourself completely to identify with the God-self within you, the Spirit of God prevails. But, initially it is a constant struggle and challenge. Without remaining vigilantly centered within the God spirit through daily study, reflection, and action, you may gradually slip back into the old attitudes of self which have imprisoned you in limited thinking.

The Bible is filled with the success stories of those who successfully applied the attitude of persistence in their daily spiritual journey. And yet, you are surrounded in a world that knows little of spiritual persistence. You can look around you and see people holding selfishly to

petty attitudes. And when you allow yourself to gravitate to the lowest common denominator of attitudes around you, you lose your persistence by accepting less than the God-self in you, which you now know to be the Truth of you. To remain persistent to your goal of spiritual growth, you let go of comparing yourself to others. Every man's spiritual journey is his own. What matters is what is happening within you in your daily walk with the Spirit of God. There is no comparing of your journey to that of another. Thus, persistence keeps you true to your course in the face of possible comparison to others.

The kingdom of heaven is yours for pursuing the cause of right. The first Beatitude revealed that His kingdom was the place of power and authority. Is this not the greatest treasure you can experience in life? Is not the revelation of the God-self in you with its dominion over every life encounter your greatest and most treasured possession? Is not the kingdom of heaven the pearl of great price? Is it not that which we truly hunger and thirst after? Is it not worth placing your trust and confidence in the Spirit of God within you? Is it not worth truly knowing this great treasure rather than simply reading or talking about it but not believing it can be for you? It is your choice to use the attitude of persistence. It is the catalyst to the kingdom of heaven.

"Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven." **HAPPY THOSE WHO PURSUE THE CAUSE OF RIGHT: THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.** Your pursuit of the attitudes which govern human behavior is your great life task. Centering your life in the persistent quest toward knowing the Spirit of God within you, shall ultimately provide you with the treasure of God's kingdom. Persistently you strive toward unity with the Power Source, God.

AFFIRMATION:

WITH GOD'S HELP THIS DAY, I PURSUE THE CAUSE OF RIGHT.

YOUR AFFIRMATION

JOY

By Practitioner Judy Ciegel



The Following is a transcript of a sermon delivered at the Divine Science Church of Crestwood in St. Louis on March 22, 2009.

Good morning!! So, we're continuing our exploration of the inherency of the month which is "joy."

The word "joy" is used a lot isn't it? Beethoven composed his 9th Symphony and it's call the "Ode to Joy." At Christmas we sing "Joy to the World." In the Bible we read "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." And when the angel appeared to the shepherds when Jesus was born she said "I bring you good news of a great joy." This great joy was the birth of the Christ child--the embodiment of true joy.

I think it's perfect timing for me to be speaking on joy because right now I'm sure you've notice that there's been a bit of "doom and gloom" in the media about the economy, it's almost tax time and here at Church we're in a transition period which can be unsettling for some, and I think it's easy to let ourselves get caught up in the "outside world" of things and senses and think that things don't seem too joyful right now. You might even find yourself saying "when will I find joy? Where will I find Joy? So I think this is the perfect time for a lesson on joy--how about you?

First, what is joy? Now Webster defines "joy" as the emotion evoked by well-being, success, good fortune or the prospect of possessing what one desires. That sounds pretty good. And maybe that new car or new house or jump in the stock market does indeed bring us some temporary happiness; these things cannot bring us true, lasting joy. And that's what we want isn't it--the kind of joy that persists within us and is independent of outward circumstances, like the economy or housing market. So I think Webster missed the mark on that one.

In Divine Science, we view Joy as the consciousness of fulfillment, a sense of being filled and overflowing with good. It is not the joy of sensation or possession, but the pure joy of being alive and aware. Aware of our oneness with God.

So, where do we find joy? Right here. And "here" has nothing to do with geography, it's not in this building or that city. If God is ever present, then God is here. If God is here, then joy is here.

And when do we find joy? Right now. Nowness is consciousness. We cannot be conscious of yesterday; we cannot be conscious of tomorrow. Now is the one and only time there is, therefore joy is found now, in this very moment.

We know joy is one of the inherencies of God. We all know the seven inherencies: love, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, power, life and joy. These inherencies are the essential attributes of Being which we inherit by nature of our oneness with God. Just like children inherit things from their parents, we inherit attributes from God. All of our possibilities lie in the truth that we are divine as is our Creator with whom we are one.

Since creation is like its Creator, are these inherencies present in everything around us? Yes. Since God is the Source of all, the life and substance of the Creation is as perfect as that of the Creator. In Genesis we read that we are created in the image and likeness of God out of God's own being and substance, according to our Creator's own idea. We derive our total nature, inwardly and outwardly, from the Divine Source of all. It also means that we share in God's creative law, forming the experiences and conditions of our everyday lives--so we have some responsibility here.

So, where does joy come from? The kind of overflowing energy and well-being which we call Joy comes from our Source, our Creator, God. Divine Science teaches that creation is God in Self-manifestation. God is the source of all, the original energy and intelligence from which all creation comes forth and by which, and in which, all creation is supported. In Acts we read "In him we live and move and have our being." So, we see this Source bringing forth visible creation out of its own being, out of its own mind-substance, according to the eternal ideas it holds in mind.

All creation is within the Creator, or Source, before coming into form, for in the Invisible is the eternal Idea of all that makes up creation, while in the visible is the expression or living form of Idea.

We are one with God and God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Concentrated thinking upon the broadness of this thought brings out some

degree of God's infinitude, some idea of the fullness that is all in all. Try as we may, enlarge our thought of it as much as we possibly can, we can scarcely comprehend the fullness and infinitude of God. To illumine this idea and to start the stretching of our thinking, let's add the words "infinite" and "omnipresent" to our inherency of Joy. Instead of just "Joy," let's expand it to "Infinite Joy, omnipresent." So this joy is limitless and everywhere, equally present. That's a lot of joy. This brings a new realization of our Source and of our own potentialities. If we are not conscious of it, we may go on our way lacking many things and losing the blessedness that IS ours. It is KNOWING the truth that makes us free. This is not the knowing that goes on in our brains, the "2 + 2" stuff, this is the knowing from deep within our beings.

Truth must be recognized in order to be realized and to become a power in our lives. And "realized" means to make real. When we truly recognize our oneness with God, then joy is realized as a part of it--true joy. Infinite Joy, omnipresent.

We have to give up human opinion, based on sense evidence of visible objects being solid matter, and accept the truth of their vibrational, sub-atomic nature. What do we mean by sense evidence? You know - things we can see, touch, taste, hear and smell. According to our senses, this pulpit looks solid and feels solid, right? But we know scientifically that it's not solid--it's a mass of moving atoms and there's more space than matter. So, we can be fooled by appearances. And from all appearances the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, right? That's the way it looks to me, anyway.

But, again, we know, scientifically that the sun doesn't move at all, but the earth is revolving around the sun creating the appearance of a sunrise and a sunset. So don't be fooled by an appearance of a lack of joy, but know joy exists, infinite joy, omnipresent. It's here -- recognize it, realize it.

We must also be willing to surrender our human opinions based on the outward, separate appearance of things, and perceive the spiritual nature of all that is. There is no separation, there's only one. If I'm one with God, then I'm one with Joy. We must KNOW this deep in our hearts, and once you get that planted firmly in your being, your whole world will change.

Know that this is the nature and substance of God, and that what is true of God is true of you and me, and of all that is. This recognition of the spiritual nature in each one is called "saluting the Christ." If you will make this your daily practice, the wholeness and perfection of God's idea will come forth into visibility in your life and in the lives of others. The consciousness of the Christhood of each one is the Universal Christ Consciousness which heals mind, body and affairs, and through which God, the good, becomes visible and tangible in our lives. And again, because Joy is an inherency of God, Joy will become visible and tangible in our lives when we awaken to the Truth. We have the capacity to feel at one with our Source, and this is Life's greatest attainment.

Okay, now that we've established joy as an inherency and that as heirs of God, we know that we already have joy in us. When we truly accept ourselves as heirs of God then we may learn to claim for our use these attributes or inherencies of God--including joy. So how do we bring out this joy and experience it in our lives? If we want to externalize joy, our thoughts must be filled with joy. We must recognize it, then realize it (or make it real), fill our minds with joy thoughts and then we will experience joy "out here." As within, so without.

Train yourself to think "I do not judge of what I am by what I feel, but I direct my feelings by what I know I am." So if you're feeling sad or down, do not think this is your true nature, but you need to turn that around and direct your feelings by what you know is your true nature--joy. Because of our oneness with God, we have the capacity to feel joy and experience fulfillment. God is joy, we are joy in action.

You must say, YES!, I will awaken myself to the truth that I am one with the Father and I possess all the attributes of the Father, including joy. I am joy in action, fulfilled and overflowing with joy. I stake my claim and live my life with the conviction that it can be no other way. I will not be fooled by appearances, but I will keep my eye single and focused on the Truth that I know.

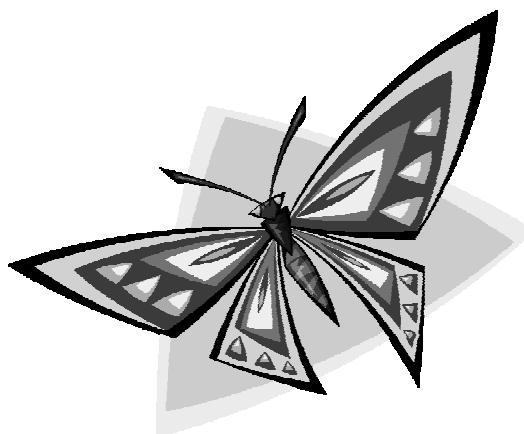
Since we are having a potluck feast today, I thought I would finish by sharing the story of the joy of the wedding feast with you.

Jesus often compared the kingdom to a wedding feast. Such feasts were occasions for joy. Remember, joy is not the fleeting happiness from getting what we think we want. It is a joy that starts deep in the heart and wells up to fill your whole soul. In ancient Palestine, very few people got enough to eat or drink. An invitation to a wedding feast was an occasion for great joy. It meant one week of feasting and drinking, not having to get the food, prepare the food, everything's taken care of, there's abundance, everybody's in good mood--kind of like being on vacation at an all-inclusive. The kingdom of God in much the same way opens the door to abundant living. The invitations to the wedding feast were sent out, but many excuses were given for not attending. God grants to each of us the freedom to say yes or no to the invitation. The invitation, however, demands some kind of decision. Jesus said "let your words be "yay yay or nay nay"--make up your mind. If you just stand outside the door and look in you don't really get the full benefit, do you--there's no food, no drink, no merriment. One must accept or reject the invitation to joy and abundant living. One can live a life surrounded by legitimate excuses and miss some of the greatest opportunities of life. Mundane affairs always make their claims upon our time: "I have to work; I was tired; I had to mow the lawn, I have to drive the carpool, etc. etc." There's always something else to do. Yet we always seem to find time for those things that are really important to us. The kingdom cannot take a back seat to other endeavors. The Bible tells us "seek ye first the kingdom and God." The joy of the kingdom is involved in throwing off the tired old excuses and giving a resounding "yes" to the kingdom. The call to a marriage supper is a universal one. In the parable at hand, the guests show up but some are not properly dressed for the occasion--they have no wedding garments. What are our garments?--Our thoughts. As within, so without. So to enter the kingdom, your thoughts must be aligned with God's thoughts. For some, this may involve a radical change in thinking. The power of Christ can effect that change. The true joy of the wedding feast stems from the change of heart that has come about on the inside. Like seeing the light, or as Oprah calls it, having an "a-ha" moment.

So, we accept the invitation, wear the proper garments of right thinking, enter the kingdom and

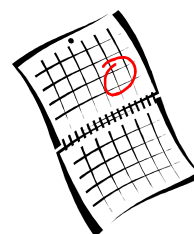
receive abundance and joy everlasting. Sound good to you? Let's do it!!

Be joyful and God bless!



Upcoming Events –

- The Mind's Road to God; a seminar by Rev. Jane Kopp. Seminar presented by Graduate Theology and Pastoral Ministry in cooperation with New Thought Vermont. **June 27 – July 1, 2009**. For information contact Dr. Edward Mahoney at St. Michaels College. E-Mail: emahoney@smcvt.edu Web: www.smcvt.edu/theology.
- Spiritual Renewal Retreat with Dr. Al G. Salazar. **August 6 – 8, 2009**. Held at the Seton Retreat Center, Emmitsburg, MD. Hosted by the Divine Science Church of the Healing Christ. Contact dschurchdc@aol.com for details.
- International New Thought Alliance 2009 Annual Congress **August 24-28, 2009**. The Congress will be held in the Chicago, IL area at the Hilton Chicago/Indian Lakes Resort. Visit www.NewThoughtAlliance.com for details.



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