

Joy in the Light / Church of the Open Bible / 10.30.16

Introduction

The theology of the Bible _____ our faith, hope, sense of peace, and experience of joy.

Just knowing we are _____ and cannot lose that should bring us joy [1 Peter 1.6-9]!

The theology of the Bible almost always comes with _____ about how we should respond to it [see 1 Peter 1.14-15 for example].

God's truths should bring us joy, but also inspire us to follow Christ into _____.

Who would know best what kind of life is likely to bless you? _____.

The _____ in the Bible's wisdom literature is the person who ignores God's revelation to live his/her own way [see Proverbs 10.8 for example].

Three circles

God is the creator, we are his _____, what he created. God rightfully is the one in charge.

We are special, because God created us in his own _____, with purpose: we are to reflect his character, represent him in life, reproduce his image by raising up children to walk with him and by being multiplying disciples who pursue the Great Commission, and we are to rule as his stewards over the earth, the resources he has given us.

_____ Yes or No: When we sin by doing something against God's will or against his character, are we in that moment reflecting God's character and representing him well? [Consider John 8.12; 1 John 1.6-7; Ephesians 5.8-10.]

We have a fundamental choice: Will we walk with God and _____ his way, or will we walk apart from God and pursue our own [sinful!] path?

We learn God's character and his will for us in the _____ [pray through Psalms 119.105, 113!].

Bottom-line

_____ Yes or No: If your goals are not the goals that God has for you, can they really be best for you?

Who is likely to know what is right and best, the God who created you or the corrupted creature that is you? _____

_____ Yes or No: If your goal is good, but you go about achieving it the wrong way, is that still sin?

_____ Yes or No: If your goal is good in that it is what God wants for you, would you need to use sinful ways to achieve it? You should trust God can deliver it to you as you act rightly within his will [see Deuteronomy 5.32-33].

_____ is one reason we take the bottom line: We want control and we don't want to submit. We don't like being a creature and we don't like being a slave of Christ.

Another reason we take the bottom-line is we struggle to _____ God in our daily life. God does not always give us what we want, other times he makes us wait for it, other times he makes us jump through hoops before the blessing comes. So we tend to take charge in our own way to get what we want.

Another reason we take the bottom-line is _____: We don't really know God's Word, so it cannot guide us; and we end up making the wrong choice, because our fleshly instincts usually are counter to God's revelation [see Proverbs 10.23].

Another reason we take the bottom-line is our _____, which makes it easy for us to rationalize and deceive ourselves.

Another reason we take the bottom-line is we are _____: we feel tempted, so we fall.

Top-line

One reason we should take the top-line is God _____ us for a certain way of life. He knows what will give us lasting fulfillment, contentment, peace, and joy; not just temporary pleasure [see Galatians 5.16-23].

Another reason we should take the top-line is God will give us better _____ blessings. We might not get what we think we want, but we get what God knows is best for us.

Another reason we should take the top-line is that walking with God is the only path to certain _____ blessings [see Romans 8.6]. These include a greater realization of the fruit of the Spirit, God's help enduring trials, strengthened faith, spiritual growth, preparation to handle life and do God's work, success inspiring others with your example, uninterrupted intimacy with God, treasure in heaven, greater enlightenment about God and his perspectives, success resisting temptation. When you turn away from God to walk in your own ways on the bottom line, you also turn away from all that. You do not lose your salvation, but you turn away from the blessings of relationship with God.

Another reason we should take the top-line is to avoid the real effects of _____ [consider Proverbs 14.12]. Those effects include corrective action from God to bring you back in repentance, deception of the mind and hardening of the heart, spiritual bondage to sin, physical illness, a loss of heavenly treasure, and negative effects on other people, including a weaker testimony for Christ [see Hebrews 3.12-13, for example].

Conclusion

We can choose a way of life based on God's revelation, which we learn in the Bible and at _____, or we can continue on the path we feel instinctively in the flesh and have learned in our culture. Only one leads to lasting joy.

This is why sermons often instruct us in what to _____. The gospel promise of salvation leads to theological truths which lead to commands. The commands explain how we live for God, how we live worthy of the gospel, how we love God and each other correctly, how we stay safely in the light, in God's will, walking with him [see Luke 11.28].

If we try to "feel _____" without learning from God's revelation, without living that revelation out in our daily lives, we are deceiving ourselves, whitewashing our problems, and – worst of all! – missing out on the solutions God provides [see John 15.10-11].

If we can learn to walk on the top line in faith and _____, in the light, by dying to our self-interest and living for Christ, then we can experience unity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we can experience intimacy with them, we can experience freedom from the power of sin, and all this will bring us joy. *We can find joy in the light of Christ!*