



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 1:4- REAL JOY!

COLORADO

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Our finite minds cannot begin to comprehend the nature of our God revealed to us in His Son Jesus Christ. We have fellowship with one another and at the same time, we have a Divine fellowship with God “the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” “Indeed, the true message of the gospel, of Christ, produces a true fellowship of shared life, where we are saved to belong! It’s a shared life with fellow believers and a shared life of communion with God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Amazing!

I. 1 JOHN 1:4- REAL JOY!

*“And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”
1John 1:4*

So John writes of the richness of the believer’s communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ along with fellow believers in 1 John 1:3. Think of it; the unfathomable wonder of everlasting communion and fellowship with God the Father! Now, John writes about joy. Real joy that comes from Jesus Christ.

We are living in a world opposed to God and under the grip of the wicked one. Our Lord Jesus Christ warned us before going to the cross in John 16:33, *“These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.”* Jesus warned us of what to expect; heartbreak, struggles, temptations, persecution. Maybe you can understand firsthand how this life is such a struggle. Jesus forewarned us, but His great promise was that He would give joy and peace in the midst of turmoil and conflict. John writes to persecuted believers that we can have fullness of joy even though we are in the world, which lies under the power of the evil one. John’s message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that brings by acceptance, a shared life with all believers and with the Father and the Son, also brings consummate joy!

A. “AND THESE THINGS WE WRITE” - 1 JOHN 1:4A

John uses the word *“and”*, thus adding a further truth to what he has already written in the first three verses. He refers to *“these things”*, which looks back to the truths he has stated previously as well as the certainties he will write of in the rest of his letter. *“These things”* are the foundational cornerstone of the Christian faith regarding Jesus Christ Who was God Himself, Who took on flesh in His Son Jesus Christ, lived a perfect life, died the death sinners deserve, and then arose in victory over sin and death. In Jesus, we come face to face with the true, living God and into fellowship through our common possession and profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In addition,

“these things” refer to the certainty of the real joy that comes only from knowing Jesus Christ.

John states again that *“we write”*, as a unified group of Apostles who walked and talked with Jesus for His three years of ministry on earth. Thus, this gave authoritative testimony to the truth written by John.

B. “SO THAT OUR JOY” - 1 JOHN 1:4B

What is the next purpose for which John is writing this letter? *“So that our joy may be made complete.”* This is a bit odd, for what does eyewitness testimony and fellowship have to do with joy? Well, for John, the only way his joy would be complete was if his readers were to believe and hold fast to the truths the Apostles had proclaimed. The conversion of a soul is what brought joy to John. That is what brings joy to God! (Luke 15:7) So, John is saying that his joy is their joy! And their joy is found only in a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ.

Real joy in the heart of one who shares the gospel is found when they observe the message proclaimed, is effective in the lives of its’ hearers. That was on John’s heart!² There is no greater joy than to be used as a tool by God to bring others into a true relationship and fellowship *“with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.”*

So what is joy? A dictionary definition would say it is emotion evoked of wellbeing, success or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires. But real Biblical joy can be found only in a relationship with Jesus Christ.³

“joy” Greek **“chara”** means a calm delight, gladness. Matthew Henry says it is a settling conviction that God sovereignly controls the events of life for the believers’ good and God’s glory and is available to all who obey Him.

Joy is the heart we possess regardless of circumstances because of our security in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul exhorts and encourages the Christians at Philippi to steadfastness in the faith and joy in the Lord. Philippians 3:1 *says, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.”* Paul, like John, had a joy that could not be diminished no matter what happened because his purpose and focus was found in serving Jesus Christ. If the cause of Christ was furthered, if the Gospel was shared, then his purpose was being fulfilled no matter what happened. That is an eternal perspective and that’s why we can rejoice and

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“And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” 1John 1:4

encourage others to the same. No matter what the hardship you might be facing or what the circumstances are, a believer in Jesus Christ can have true, deep abiding joy through life. Joy is not a feeling or emotion. If it were, then Scripture would command us to have a certain feeling or emotion. It does not work that way. Joy is not a feeling that comes and goes. It is not an emotion that is with us one moment and gone the next. Joy is a continuous practice that becomes a habit because of our deep relationship with Jesus Christ. Joy results from a secure relationship with our Lord, one in which we submit our lives to God.

Adversity and troubles in life give us no reason to be happy. But, joy is a fruit that is present in our lives because its' source is found in our Lord Jesus Christ alone. Joy cannot be found in any source outside of God Himself. It is eternal and will not come or go because it is found in the secure, relationship with Jesus Christ that never changes. Therefore, it characterizes the life of a true believer and is present regardless of life's events that can test the foundation of one's faith. Because our joy is in Christ, it is limitless regardless of what comes our way.

As you serve in the Capitol, it will be hard. There will be one obstacle after another. Will your joy remain in the toil? Will it remain through stiff adversity? It can! Will you be known by others as one having a joy in spite of circumstances? If you are a believer in the sovereign Lord of the universe, you possess a joy that need not be shaken through life's challenging tests. It endures because of your secure relationship in Christ. John's whole focus in life was Jesus Christ and sharing the gospel as an eyewitness to the truth. Therefore, if the cause of Christ was furthered by his circumstances, if the gospel was proclaimed, then there was joy! Though John endured severe persecution under the cruel reign of Domitian, his life was Christ's. When he was exiled on the Island of Patmos, God used that time for John to write again. This time it was the book of Revelation, which offered encouragement that God was still in control and had a plan. Oh that we might have this perspective!

John wants his readers to experience joy! That includes you and I. That joy will come from understanding the reality of Christ, the saving truth of the gospel and the fellowship the believer has with one another and with God the Father and

His Son Jesus Christ. If that is true, then all true followers of Christ can have true joy.⁴

C. “MAY BE MADE COMPLETE.”- 1 JOHN 1:4C

The word “complete” suggests a present fullness with a future fulfillment beyond this present life. Our present joy in this life is just a small taste of our ultimate joy at the final revelation of Christ. Yet in this life is the privilege of serving Christ and by that service, there is a satisfaction and joy that is full.

Yes it is true that perfect joy in this world isn't possible. However, we look to the promise of eternal life, beyond this life to the life of heaven with Christ forever. That will bring completed joy! And it will bring completed fellowship! Psalm 16:11 says, “in Your presence is fullness of joy.” This is what we have to look forward to.

John wrote these words spoken by Christ in the upper room, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11) He said this right before going to the cross. Later, the author of Hebrews would write this: “Therefore since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:1-3) Did you see what the word “joy” referred to? The joy set before Christ was the cross on which our salvation was purchased by His sinless sacrifice.

You will never know joy until you know Christ. He is the only source of real joy. So John begins with Christ. Christ is essential and central. Nothing can be said by way of encouragement until we know Christ. We need to be clear about Christ. Thus, John begins his Epistle focused on Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we have access to God and fellowship with the Father. You must begin with Christ as God Incarnate, the only begotten Son of God and our Savior. If you do not believe that, then there is no joy!⁵ Come to Christ!

¹ Hamilton, Ian, *Let's Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg.9.

² Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg.50.

³ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg.19.

⁴ Lloyd-Jones, Martyn, *Life in Christ: Studies in John*. Crossway: Wheaton, IL, 2002. Pg.30.

⁵ Lloyd-Jones, Martyn, *Life in Christ: Studies in John*. Crossway: Wheaton, IL, 2002. Pg.35.