

Monday, December 17 – *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)* Ever heard this one before? “He isn’t the brightest bulb in the bunch.” We understand this to be describing someone who isn’t that smart. Yet, today we want to look at brightness in a different way. As followers of Jesus we have a light that shines from us. This light doesn’t shine because of us, we are merely the reflectors of the light of Jesus Christ. Our job isn’t to be the light, our job is to let the light shine. One of the ways that we accomplish this is by being joy-full. If nothing else, us followers of Jesus should be joy-full. After all, we have forgiveness of sins, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and eternal life. You might not be the richest, you might not be the best looking or even the smartest, but as followers of Jesus we are the brightest bulbs in the bunch.

Tuesday, December 18 – *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)* One of the things that all of us hear at Christmas is that this time of year is very hard for some people. In fact, there is a chance that this describes you. If it does or even if it doesn’t, there is something for you to ponder today. Do you believe this verse? If you said “Yes”, then your next question is if you have faith in this verse? Remember, faith without works is belief. This is arguably the most joy-full time of the year. Do you really think that God doesn’t want you to experience that joy? Do you think that you don’t deserve that joy? Are you allowing something of this world to rob you of the joy of Christmas? Lots of questions to ponder, but they all come back to our verse for today. Do you believe it? If you do, think of one way that you can act like it today.

Wednesday, December 19 – *“When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.” (1 Peter 2:23)* We are so quick to make sure we get our revenge. If someone hurts us, we respond by using any opportunity to hurt them or someone else. It is as if we experience a loss of self when we are abused in any way and we naturally strike back in order to be whole again. The problem is that no amount of revenge will make you whole again. Enter the upside-down way of Jesus. No returning of abuse and no threatening. He leaves the revenge to God, which gives him more time to be joy-full. Think about it, most of us don’t experience joy because our lives are so clouded by all of the revenge that we are seeking. God’s heart is broken because of your suffering. Allow God to take care of it. In the meantime, you take care of being joy-full.

Thursday, December 20 – *“To speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone.” (Titus 3:2)* These are the words of the apostle Paul to his friend Titus. Titus was leading a group of churches in Crete. Paul wanted to encourage Titus by giving him some pointers on how the members of the church should be acting. Notice that the people are to avoid speaking evil and quarreling. Instead they are to be gentle and are called to show courtesy to everyone. We, in the present-day church, would do good to follow the same directions. How many of us have seen a church destroyed because people spoke evil of each other? How many of us have been a part of church that was quarreling? How can we become gentler? How can we get better at showing courtesy to everyone? How can we become more joy-full?

Friday, December 21 – *“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.” (James 3:17)* “Wisdom from above” is what all of us are seeking. Why else would you be reading this devotion? Why else would you even want a relationship with God? You want to learn how to live this life. You want to learn how to deal with everything that life throws you. Life isn’t always fair. You won’t win at everything you attempt. People will hurt you. You will get sick, suffer loss and have your heart broken. What wisdom does God have in the face of all of this? Re-read our verse for today. Is that what you expected in the face of a life that isn’t always fair? Regardless of what hand life deals you, the wisdom of God calls us to rise above. Not to ignore it or deny it, but to embrace the ebbs and flows, the ups and downs of life and to be real. Being joy-full isn’t the same as being fake, it is simply the living expression of the wisdom from above.

Revel –

How?

Why?

Joy-Full =