

ISSUE 1 2026

# INSIGHTS

GUIDED BY  
*Grace*



FROM THE BIBLE-TEACHING MINISTRY OF PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

JESUS GAVE US HIS TRUTH SO THAT HIS JOY MIGHT BE IN US. AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, OUR JOY IS FULL ( JOHN 15:11).

... WILL YOU CHOOSE JOY? IF YOU WILL, I CAN MAKE YOU A PROMISE: LAUGHTER AND ENTHUSIASM WILL FOLLOW.

- Joy Is A Choice, Page 18

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

# WHAT'S INSIDE

Growing up in a home infused with laughter, I treasure the joy my father brings into our lives. His infectious humour brightens the darkest days, reminding us that even in challenging times, there is always a reason to choose to smile. His ability to find joy amidst struggle continues to teach me resilience and the importance of embracing life's lighter moments.

Recently, we held an inspiring International Student Summit, where participants came together to discuss the transformative power of faith around the globe.

It was a fabulous opportunity to engage with young leaders and share insights from different nations, highlighting how our collective ministry can bridge gaps and foster understanding across borders. These enriching conversations underscore our commitment to spreading hope through teaching and community engagement.

At Insight for Living, we are committed to sharing God's truth and fostering communities of hope and growth. One powerful way to contribute to our mission is through planned giving. This approach not only ensures that your legacy endures but it also aids in sustaining our ministry's efforts to reach people worldwide.

By considering a planned gift, you can profoundly impact lives with the gospel for generations to come, supporting our

programmes that extend from our local communities to various countries and cultures around the world.

Additionally, we are excited to offer our 90-day devotional, Cultivating Joy. This resource is designed to encourage spiritual growth and resilience amid life's challenges. Each day, you'll find insights and reflections meant to deepen your relationship with God and enrich your life with joy.

Amid the twists and turns of my life, a profound sense of contentment arises, rooted in faith. Jesus has been my anchor; knowing and trusting His love transforms fleeting happiness into lasting joy. In every trial, His presence offers a reassuring embrace, guiding us all toward hope and peace.

Grateful for His lasting joy,

*Charissa*

**CHARISSA SWINDOLL GAITHER**  
PRESIDENT - IFL USA



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Dear Friend,

Many leaders in my life have helped shape me into the man I am today. Each one of them was effective because they embodied a spirit of kindness and encouragement. **Can you imagine if all the leaders we know shared those same values?**

**FIRST THESSALONIANS 2:8, 10-12 READS,**

*We had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.*

*... You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly and rightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

**What an incredible standard to live by!**

This is what we do day in and day out at Insight for Living. We proclaim to you "the gospel of God." It is our passion and purpose to share the comfort and hope in His promises, and to embrace every opportunity to touch lives, both at home and around the world. Your generosity helps do that.

Will you join me on this journey of compassionate leadership – with your family, at your job, in your church, leading volunteers? Let's prioritise kindness and encouragement in our interactions – knowing that God's message will be more readily received if His followers communicate with genuine care and attention.

Leading with compassion,

PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL



# A CHECKLIST FOR LASTING JOY

BY PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

## “LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.”

This phrase comes straight out of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Citizens of the United States consider them as inalienable rights. The right to life. The right to liberty. And the right to the pursuit of happiness. And they are rights to be claimed so that U.S. citizens can live in and enjoy the freedom of their country. But happiness? The promise is not to *attain* it ...but to *pursue* it.

Happiness, though, rarely likes to stick around. I mean a lasting happiness, an unshakable sense of contentment, an abiding bliss. It's the kind of happiness that stays truly satisfied because of an inner peace deep within, regardless of circumstances. Have you ever stopped to think how few people have truly found happiness?

But happiness is worth pursuing despite its tendency to vanish like a puff of smoke. Admittedly, to some, finding happiness is too good to be true. In one way, it is ... if we're looking for it in the wrong places.

So here's the plain and simple truth I want to emphasize: **Only by knowing Jesus can lasting happiness become a reality for you.** Jesus said He came to give us “a rich and satisfying life” (John 10:10). The apostle John wrote, “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

I think a secret to tapping into this life of lasting happiness lies in Jesus' Beatitudes. On a little plateau north of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus delivered the sermon of all sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, and opened with these famous declarations of blessing. Nine times in a row, from Matthew 5:3-11, Jesus said, “God blesses ...” (NLT) or “Blessed are ...” (NASB). The more I've studied them, the more I've thought, *How different this is from anything the world can offer.* Jesus redefined true happiness by showing what it looks like when a person participates in the kingdom-of-heaven kind of life right now on earth.

So what does blessed even mean? Lots of synonyms have been offered: “fortunate,” “contented,” “blissful,” “serene,” “unaffected by one's surroundings,” “self-contained.” Think of the Beatitudes as inner attitudes that prevail over all external situations. It's good to remember that they are pronouncements. Not probabilities. They're celebrations. Not commands. “Be this” or “do that” don't appear. But perhaps my favourite way of rendering these blessings is like this, “O, the lasting joy ...” When you read the Beatitudes, think, “O, the lasting joy ...”

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



CHOOSE ONE BEATITUDE EACH DAY TO PRAY THROUGH. USE THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION AND THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE TO ENRICH YOUR REFLECTIONS ON JESUS' WORDS.

## MATTHEW 5:3-11

### NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

- "God blesses those who are poor and realise their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.
- God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
- God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.
- God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.
- God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers."

## MATTHEW 5:3-11

### NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."

Now let me add this. When these qualities are modelled in our lives, the world just cannot believe it. Many will be drawn to us like a magnet. The church, God's people, doesn't attract the interest of the world by being like the world but by being different from the world. When you and I are different from the world, suddenly the world's curiosity is aroused, and many will be drawn to our Saviour.

At the same time, many will despise us, as you read in verse 11, because we are different and the world often lacks a place for what's different. J. B. Phillips had the audacity to create beatitudes that follow the world's system:

Happy are the "pushers":  
for they get on in the world.

Happy are the hard-boiled:  
for they never let life hurt them.

Happy are they who complain:  
for they get their own way in the end.

Happy are the blasé:  
for they never worry over their sins.

Happy are the slave-drivers:  
for they get results.

Happy are the knowledgeable men  
[and women] of the world:  
for they know their way around.

Happy are the trouble-makers:  
for they make people take notice of them.<sup>1</sup>

How different are the values of Jesus' kingdom! And Jesus was the perfect model, yet they drove nails into His hands and feet. If we are rejected like Him, He then offers a command: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:12).

To end, let me offer one practical suggestion to make this checklist of lasting joy more a part of your life. Take one beatitude per day and reflect on it and pray through it for the entire day. Day one would be "poor in spirit." You'll think about your need for God the whole day. Day two would be "those who mourn." You'll think about your own carnality and the wrongs of this world and how desperate we are for God's forgiveness, renewal, and comfort. Day three would be on "the gentle." And so on.

Imagine how different you'll be a year from now by focusing on one per day – different from those around you and different from who you are now. The lasting joy of God will be deeper in your life.

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Phillips, *Good News: Thoughts on God and Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 33–34.

This article was adapted by Insight for Living staff from the original transcript of Charles R. Swindoll's sermon, "Checklist for Lasting Joy." Copyright © 2015, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.

# THE REASON FOR MY JOY

BY LUCI SWINDOLL

CHUCK DEEPLY LOVED HIS LATE SISTER, LUCI SWINDOLL (1932–2020). IF SHE WAS KNOWN FOR ANYTHING, IT WAS FOR HER JOY! WITH HER WOMEN OF FAITH FRIENDS, SHE CO-AUTHORED A BOOK TITLED *OUTRAGEOUS JOY*, AND WE WANTED TO SHARE SOME OF HER THOUGHTS WITH YOU ON THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC.

In my closet, I have a plaid skirt that's more than twenty-five years old, five sizes too small, and quite out of style. Believe me, there's no chance I'll ever wear it again. Not on your life. But will I discard it? Not on your life. My daddy gave it to me.

Anything from him, I plan to keep. Although he's been dead for decades, he's still very much alive in my mind. He was a wonderful man: competent, tender, funny, intelligent, and full of wisdom. I thought he was the greatest guy on the planet.

The two of us enjoyed a "mutual admiration society." One year I was trying to decide what to give him for his birthday, and my brothers suggested a framed picture of myself, candles, and matches. "Since he worships you anyway," they reasoned, "he could build a little shrine."

Daddy gave me tangible gifts, and many intangible ones as well. I received letters from him every week when I was away at college, and for years afterward while I worked in another city.

The letters were laced with love, encouragement from God's Word, and profound understanding of me – not only as his daughter but also as a person. He had my best interest at heart and made that very clear, all the time. By his lavish giving, unconditional love, and awareness of my deepest needs, Daddy was all the cheering squad I ever needed. Because of him, I had an excellent model of a gracious, caring heavenly Father.

Although we do not all have that kind of earthly model of love and affection, everybody who is a child of God has a heavenly Father who exceeds all expectations and imagination. My dad may have seemed like the ringleader of our home, but the reason he was such a great parent was he knew the true Ringleader intimately. It was my father's relationship with Christ that made him such a quality person.

Each of us who knows Christ personally can relate to a perfect heavenly Father and become more like Him every day.

AND I AM CONVINCED THAT NOTHING CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE. NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NEITHER ANGELS NOR DEMONS, NEITHER OUR FEARS FOR TODAY NOR OUR WORRIES ABOUT TOMORROW – NOT EVEN THE POWERS OF HELL CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE. NO POWER IN THE SKY ABOVE OR IN THE EARTH BELOW – INDEED, NOTHING IN ALL CREATION WILL EVER BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD THAT IS REVEALED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

*Romans 8:38–39*

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

That's incredible! When we become part of God's family, we immediately receive numerous gifts. To name just a few:

- We're set free from an unrelenting law to experience unmerited grace (Romans 6:14; Galatians 3:25).
- We're given immediate access to the throne of God for praise or petition (Hebrews 4:14-16).
- We're indwelt by the Spirit of God and guaranteed His presence in all our heartaches and temptations (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
- We're promised a life that never ends and a glorious home in heaven (1 John 5:11).
- We're given a job to do that has an eternal purpose (Matthew 28:19).
- We're forgiven of everything we ever did wrong (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14).
- We're assured that all our needs will be met (Philippians 4:19).
- We're promised that God will never leave us or forsake us (Psalm 37:25; Hebrews 13:5).

#### NEED A REASON TO SMILE?

PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE JOYS OF YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE AND BE TRANSFORMED BY YOUR LOVING, GRACIOUS, WONDERFUL, PERFECTLY OUTRAGEOUS GOD.

– LUCI SWINDOLL

These are only the tip of the iceberg of gifts that become ours. And get this – they're free! All these gifts are given to us simply because we believe what God said, receive what God did, and are now recipients of who God is – the giver of abundant, eternal life.

There is nothing average about the God we know, the Father we long to serve. He's unconventional and exorbitant. He's extravagant in His giving. He's unrestrained in His love for us. In fact, God is extraordinary in every way. He's outrageous! If you and I were to catch even a glimpse of who He is, our lives would never be the same. And yet, He's shown us who He is. His truth and glory are revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. And we see it every day in the universe He created, in the lives of others, and in our own experiences. We often miss it, but it's there. We just forget to notice.

Let's notice. Let's pay careful attention. Let's let our everyday lives be invaded and transformed by this loving, gracious, wonderful, perfectly outrageous God.

The **joy** He provides is outrageous because it is completely unencumbered by the circumstances we face.

His **grace** is outrageous as well. It is unmerited, unwarranted, undeserved, and unrelenting. His Word says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12 NASB).

And **peace**! The Bible promises, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7 NASB).

Whose life wouldn't be transformed if he or she experienced that kind of peace no matter what was happening?

And just think about His **love**. It never ends. It never even wavers. The apostle Paul thrilled at this outrageous thought: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39 NASB).

And **freedom**? Now this is fabulous! We have freedom from the law, freedom in Christ, freedom to be all we were created to be. "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1 NASB).

There's no question about God giving us outrageous **hope**. Hope enables us to feel the intangible, imagine the invisible, and achieve the impossible. We believe God keeps His promises, and with confidence we wait for them to be fulfilled. What God told His people through the prophet Jeremiah is still true for us today: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope'" (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB).

God's whole plan to reconcile the human race to Himself was outrageous. It was inevitable that His own Son would be outrageous too! Jesus was a man of paradoxes who shocked, surprised, incensed, or delighted everyone He met. As His followers, we shouldn't be surprised that our lives will take some outrageous twists and turns, or that we will sometimes stand out as "circus freaks" in a world that doesn't recognize our glorious nature in Christ. As Thelma [Wells] put it, to be a person of faith means that "your elevator doesn't go to the top floor. Your clock ticks in a counterclockwise direction. Your cart is before the horse. And your joy is always ignited in spite of your delicate condition."

If we really took God at His Word and lived out the implications of these outrageous attributes, our lives would be characterized by what Eugene Peterson calls "the plain meaning of the message of Christ." There would be much more than mere moral reformation in us; our lives would be utterly transformed! We'd be like the early Christians whose humdrum human lives became linked to the very life of God Himself—the divine Ringleader of the whole shebang. It was then, if you recall, they turned the world upside down.

Grasp the outrageous truth: God is here. God is now. And He longs to pour out all of who He is into your life every day. His life can be in you and flow through you. Outrageous!

Adapted from Luci Swindoll, "Our Divine Ringleader," in *Outrageous Joy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 9-13

# OUR REFUGE, OUR HELPER – IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

BY NATHAN POTTS  
REGIONAL PASTOR - INSIGHT FOR LIVING AUSTRALIA

Martin Luther, the great reformer, was most famous for one hymn. The hymn is called “A Mighty Fortress is our God”. He penned this hymn during what he would describe as the most difficult year of his life.

After ten demanding years of leading the Reformation, a dizzy spell overcame him in the middle of a sermon on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1527, forcing him to stop preaching. Luther feared for his life and on July 6<sup>th</sup>; while eating dinner with friends, he felt an acute buzzing in his ear and lay down, again convinced he was at the end of his life. He partially regained his strength, but a debilitating discouragement set in as a result.

In addition, heart problems and severe intestinal complications escalated the pangs of death. Of this ordeal, Luther wrote, “I spent more than a week in death and hell. My entire body was in pain, and I still tremble. Completely abandoned by Christ,

I laboured under the vacillations and storms of desperation and blasphemy against God.”

During this time without warning Luther’s one-year-old son Hans became desperately ill. With death surrounding him on every side, Luther was driven to seek refuge in God as never before.

**GOD IS OUR STRONG REFUGE;  
HE IS TRULY OUR HELPER IN  
TIMES OF TROUBLE.**

– PSALM 46:1 (NET)

Psalm 46 became the strength of his soul, and as a result, Luther expanded its truths into the hymn for which he is most famous. Its majestic and thunderous proclamation of God who is our all-sufficient refuge in our weakest moments.

This Psalm proclaims that God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are refuges of lies, all other strength is weakness, for power and true comfort belongs to God. He never withdraws himself from his afflicted and troubled. He is their help, truly, effectually, constantly; he is present or near them, close at their side and ready to support. He is “A very present help in trouble.” God through the indwelling Spirit is more present than any friend or relative can be and his assistance comes at the needed time.

When we are confronted and comforted with this truth our response is: “We will not fear.” With God on our side, how irrational would fear be! Where he is, all power is, and all love, why therefore should we be frightened? God offers protection, in our time of trouble. When chaos reigns God provides calm and order. He is indeed our Mighty Fortress.

# WALKING ON WAVES

EXPERIENCING JOY IN DIFFICULT TIMES

BY **BRYCE KLABUNDE** - VICE PRESIDENT,  
SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES MINISTRIES

Is it possible to experience joy even when your world is crumbling? When the doctor diagnoses you with a serious disease? When someone you love dies? When you lose a job, hit the wall financially, endure mistreatment?

Some people try hiding their heartache behind a mask of happiness. When a friend asks, "How are you doing?" they reply, "Couldn't be better!" Inside, though, they're falling apart.

Experiencing joy in difficult times is more than a cover-up scheme. It's a relational reality. *Joy doesn't depend on the absence of trials but the presence of our Saviour.* The reason for our joy is Christ Himself.

## WALKING ON WAVES

When your world is falling apart and the storm is raging all around you, keep your eyes on Jesus. That's what Peter did. The disciples were in a boat, "fighting heavy waves" in a storm (Matthew 14:24). But then they saw Jesus coming toward them walking on the water! When Jesus called Peter to come to Him, Peter "went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus" (14:29).

It wasn't Peter's positive mind-set that kept him afloat. Peter simply fastened his faith to Jesus, who empowered him to walk through the storm. Peter kept on walking... until "he saw the strong wind and the waves," and he became "terrified and began to sink" (14:30). Fear frayed his faith and down went Peter.

But think about it. For those few incredible moments when his eyes were on Jesus, Peter was walking on waves! Can you imagine his exhilaration, his pure delight, his thrilling freedom as he walked on water as though it were a meadow of green grass? *The storm still raged.* The waves beat against him and soaked his skin, but he had a smile on his face! He was experiencing joy in the nearness of Christ in the storm.

## JESUS, OUR JOY

What do you see in Jesus as you look to Him in your storm?

First, you see His *compassion*. The same pelting rain that stung Peter's face stung Jesus' face. He felt what Peter felt. He feels your heartache and pain too. He's with you on your hospital bed. He holds your hand as they wheel you into surgery. He winces when you hurt, and tears streak down His face when they streak down yours. He truly understands.

Second, you see His *sovereignty*. Jesus is the master of the storm. He could calm it with a word... or He could call you to walk through it. Either way, He has His reasons for doing what He does. You may not understand His ways, but you can trust His heart.

Third, you see His *goodness*. He's not cruel. He's not punitive. He takes no delight in your suffering. Rather, He's using your trial to draw you near to Him, causing even the hard things "to work together for the good of those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

Are you weathering a storm? Is Jesus calling you to come closer to Him through it? Don't let fear pull you under. Fix your eyes on Him. Experience the joy of walking on waves with Him.

# FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL PLAN TO ELEVATE YOUR JOY

MEDITATE ON THESE THIRTY BIBLE PASSAGES, ONE PER DAY, TO HELP YOU FOCUS ON JESUS. AS YOU WALK THROUGH YOUR STORM, FIX YOUR EYES ON...

## JESUS' COMPASSION — HE IS WITH YOU

<i>He feels your heartache.</i>	MATTHEW 9:35-36
<i>He feeds your soul.</i>	MARK 6:30-42
<i>He sees your tears.</i>	LUKE 7:11-17
<i>He soothes your wounds.</i>	LUKE 10:30-34
<i>He embraces you.</i>	LUKE 15:11-20
<i>He is tender toward you.</i>	PHILIPPIANS 1:6-8
<i>He is kind to you.</i>	JAMES 5:10-11
<i>He is faithful.</i>	PSALM 86:15-17
<i>He loves you.</i>	PSALM 103:13-18
<i>He never leaves you.</i>	ISAIAH 49:13-16

## JESUS' SOVEREIGNTY — HE IS IN CONTROL

<i>He has all authority.</i>	MATTHEW 8:5-10
<i>He is glorious.</i>	MATTHEW 17:1-6
<i>He calms the storm.</i>	MARK 4:35-41
<i>He rules the sea.</i>	MARK 6:45-51
<i>He is God in human form.</i>	JOHN 1:1-14
<i>He holds all things together.</i>	COLOSSIANS 1:15-17
<i>He is Lord.</i>	PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11
<i>He reigns forever.</i>	HEBREWS 1:6-9
<i>He is God and Saviour.</i>	TITUS 2:11-14
<i>He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.</i>	1 TIMOTHY 6:12-16

## JESUS' GOODNESS — HE IS FOR YOU

<i>He lights your way.</i>	JOHN 8:12
<i>He gives you life.</i>	JOHN 10:10; 11:25
<i>He is your shepherd.</i>	JOHN 10:11-15
<i>He will come for you.</i>	JOHN 14:1-3
<i>He gives you peace.</i>	ROMANS 5:1-2; EPHESIANS 2:12-14
<i>He died for you.</i>	ROMANS 8:31-34
<i>He holds on to you.</i>	ROMANS 8:35-39
<i>He is your hope.</i>	COLOSSIANS 1:27; 3:1-3
<i>He is your advocate.</i>	1 JOHN 2:1-2
<i>He has good plans for you.</i>	JEREMIAH 29:11-13



# JOY IS A CHOICE

I HAVE TOLD YOU THESE THINGS SO THAT YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH MY JOY. YES, YOUR JOY WILL OVERFLOW!

John 15:11

God is no distant deity but a constant reality, a very present help whenever needs occur. So? So live like it. And laugh like it! Paul did. While he lived, he drained every drop of joy out of every day that passed. How do I know? This little letter to the Philippians says so.

- In the first chapter of Philippians, we learn *there is laughter in living* — whether or not we get what we want, in spite of difficult circumstances, and even when there are conflicts.
- In the second chapter, we learn *there is laughter in serving*. It starts with the right attitude (humility), it is maintained through right theology (God is God), and it is encouraged by right models and mentors (friends like Timothy and Epaphroditus).
- In the third chapter, we learn *there is laughter in sharing*, as Paul shares three happy things: his testimony, his goal of living, and his reason for encouragement.
- Finally, in the fourth chapter, we learn *there is laughter in resting*. These have to be some of

the finest lines ever written on the principle of personal contentment.

What a treasure house of joy! Frankly, I'm excited – and I know you are too. Joy is a choice. You will discover that each person must choose joy if he or she hopes to laugh again.

Jesus gave us His truth so that His joy might be in us. And when that happens, our joy is full (John 15:11). The tragedy is that so few choose to live joyfully. Will you choose joy? If you will, I can make you a promise: laughter and enthusiasm will follow.

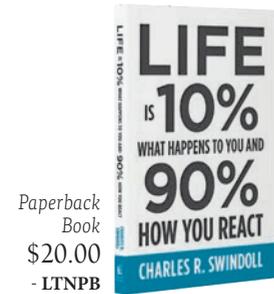
Basically, there are two kinds of people: people who choose joy and people who don't. People who choose joy pay no attention to what day of the week it is... or how old they are ... or what level of pain they are in. They have deliberately decided to laugh again because they have chosen joy. People who do not choose joy miss the relief laughter can bring. And because they do not, they cannot. And because they can't, they won't. Which one are you?

Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, *Laugh Again: Experience Outrageous Joy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 27

# SEEK JESUS FIND JOY

LIFE THROWS US CURVE BALLS.  
IT'S WHAT WE DO WITH THEM THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

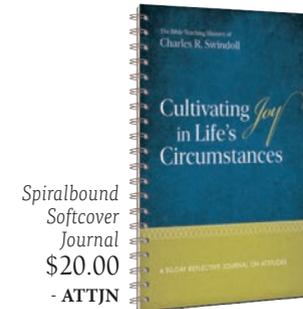
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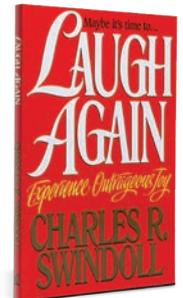
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