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Believing parents want to provide their children with everything they need. They will feed them, dress them, hold them, keep them safe, and above all teach them God's Word. Because they do all these things for their children, their children can live a joy-filled life with a merry heart. What if someone told you that God desires the same thing for His children? Would you believe it? It's true. God provides the best for us, His children, in every category of life. He promises in His Word to supply all our need (Philippians 4:19). And He wants to see us merry, full of joy, glad.

Psalms 68:3:

But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

The Hebrew word for "be glad" here means joyful or showing joy. In the Bible, God shows us that having a joyful, or merry, heart is beneficial to our lives in different ways.

Proverbs 17:22:

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

"Merry" is translated from the same Hebrew word as "be glad" in Psalm 68. "Medicine" here is defined as a "cure" or "healing." A glad heart makes the body healthy—it has a positive effect on our physical health. What is another benefit of a merry heart?

Proverbs 15:13:

A merry [glad, joyful] heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Biblically the “heart” means the seat of the personal life, referring to the innermost part of one’s mind. And our countenance is what shows on our faces. What goes on inside, shows outside. People may not be able to read our thoughts, but they can often see what is going on in our heads by looking at our faces, hearing what we say, and observing what we do. Having a merry heart not only benefits us but can also benefit those around us. People will see that we have a merry heart—that we are glad, joyful—and may then want to have what we have.

Now that we have looked at some of the benefits of having a merry heart, the question remains, how do we get a merry heart? Let’s consider Jeremiah 15:16: “Thy [God’s] words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart....” God’s Word is what makes our heart merry!

The more we learn about God’s Word, the more we understand God’s heart for His children. We fill our heart with the truth of God’s Word and we believe what that Word says, because God is able and willing to perform what He has promised in His Word. For example, we can rejoice because God says that we can prosper and be in health (III John 2), that we can trust in Him (Psalms 5:11), that we can pray to Him and know He hears us (I John 5:14,15), and that we can call upon Him in times of trouble and He will deliver us (Psalms 50:15). The Word rejoices our heart, and we can read it every day! Whether it’s a verse or a chapter or even more, the time we spend with God in His Word helps us to see why our hearts can be merry. We can rejoice in the Word we know, being confident that God will take care of us in every situation.

Having a merry heart also involves controlling what we think. God lovingly gave us the ability to control our thinking; we can choose what thoughts we keep and what thoughts we discard. You may ask, “How can I control every thought that comes into my mind?” It is a moment-by-moment process of deciding what we hold fast to and what we get rid of. And a great key that will help us is to keep pouring on the pure truths of God’s Word. We can fill our minds with the encouraging, gladdening, powerful promises of God—leaving no room for negative thoughts to linger.

Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

As we each think on the positives of God's Word, we begin to put that Word in the innermost part of our mind. We fill our heart with God's Word and then decide to think the Word and believe it. And what goes on inside, shows outside. We bring into evidence in our lives the ideas and beliefs we hold in our hearts.

Proverbs 23:7:

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he....

Having a merry heart has a positive effect on our physical health, joyfully shows on our faces, and opens doors to help others around us. The thoughts we hold in our hearts affect what we say, what we do, and how people see us. We can decide each day to have a merry heart by reading the abundant promises God has given to us in His Word, trusting that what He says in the Bible is true. We have the power to change our thoughts. We take one thought at a time, line it up with what God says, and believe His Word. Because parents provide for the needs of their children physically, mentally, and spiritually, their children can live with joy in their hearts. Because our heavenly Father provides for all the needs of His children, we too can have a merry heart!

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