

“Claiming My ‘Peace’ of Heaven in 2011”

Today’s Lesson

Your Compass In Life

PowerPoint notes available at:

www.unityofbakersfield.org

Your Compass In Life



Make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Psalms 66:1

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The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. For these things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

(John 10:10;15:11)

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Joy and gladness are strength-giving, especially if the mind is fixed on the things of the Spirit. Affirm daily: “The joy of the Lord is my strength.”

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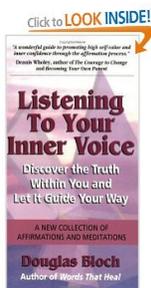


A young man was out driving his new car in the country when all of a sudden he noticed a three-legged chicken running right along side the car. Looking down at his speedometer he couldn't believe his eyes, the chicken was keeping pace with him at 55 miles an hour. He accelerated to 60 miles an hour and the chicken kept right up with him. Dumb-founded the young man pulled over in a farmer's yard, rolled down his window and ask, "Did you see that?"

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The farmer said, "Sure, I saw it. In fact I see plenty of them all the time." "Well where did it come from?" ask the young man. "That's one of our three-legged chickens." "Three-legged chickens! What do you mean a three-legged chicken?" "Well," said the farmer, "there are three of us in our family: my wife, my son, and myself. We all like drumsticks. So we decided to breed a three-legged chicken so we all a drumstick." "Well, do they taste good" asked the young man. The farmer shook his head and replied, "I don't know. We've never been able to catch one."

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Douglas Bloch writes:
Today and always, let joy be your compass in life. When choosing a direction in life, choose the path of your heart. Do what you love, follow your bliss.

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“A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.”
 - Hugh Downs

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Studies have shown that when we use our ability to laugh at ourselves and our life it becomes a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. Developing a joyful heart helps to lighten your burdens, inspires hope, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert.

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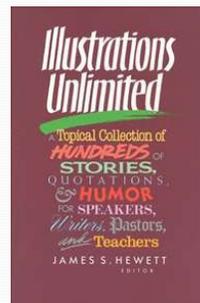
The health benefits of developing an attitude of happiness are:

1. Relaxes the whole body, helping to relieve physical tension and stress.
2. Laughing boosts the immune system by decreasing stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, improving our resistance to disease.
3. Laughing triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins are known to promote an overall sense of well-being and can temporarily relieve pain.

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4. Creating joy has been proven to improve the function of blood vessels and blood flow, which goes a long way in help you protect your heart from cardiovascular problems.
5. Being able to laugh at life helps to dissolve distressing emotions. After all, you can't feel anxious, angry, or sad when you're laughing.
6. Allowing more joy in your life reduces stress, increases energy, allowing you to stay focused and accomplish more.

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We have all used the statement, *“Have a good day.”* writes James Hewett. An older member of our church taught me a beautiful lesson one day when I casually wished him a good day. He remarked, *“They're all good days, God said so. It's what we put in them that changes them.”*

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Using humor in your life will help develop and strengthen your relationships. Being able to laugh at yourself and with others allows you to:

1. Be more spontaneous.
2. Get of your head and away from your troubles.
3. Let go of defensiveness so you can forget judgments, criticisms, and doubt.
4. Release inhibitions so you don't feel the need to hold back or hold on too tight.

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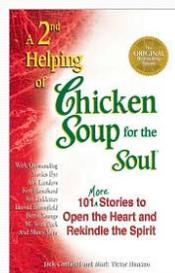
Are you having fun yet? If not, why not? Look at the rules you live by. Do they allow you to laugh at yourself? Do they allow you play when you feel like playing? Do they allow the inner child time to just let go?

Joy is our birthright. Being able to form a smile is an innate and inborn reaction to those things the brain recognizes as being funny to us.

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Mutual laughter and joyful play is an essential component to creating strong and healthy relationships. The steps are simple: Smile more; Count your blessings; Seek out happy people and spend as much time as you can around them; Bring humor into your conversations whenever possible.

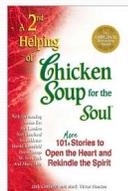
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My wife, Tere, and I purchased a new car in December. Even though we had tickets to fly from California to Houston to visit her family for Christmas, we decided to drive to Texas to break in the new car. We packed the car and took off for a wonderful week with Grandma.

We had a wonderful time and stayed to the last possible minute visiting with Grandma. On the return trip we needed to get home in a hurry, so we drove straight through—one person driving while the other one slept. After driving in a hard rain for several hours, we arrived home late a night. We were tired and ready for a hot shower and a soft bed. I had the feeling that no matter how tired we were, we should unpack the car that night, but all Tere wanted was the hot shower and the soft bed, so we decided to wait and unload the car in the morning.

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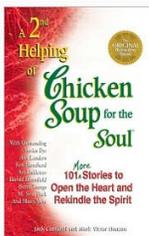


At seven o'clock in the morning, we got up refreshed and ready to unpack the car. When we opened the front door, there was no car in the driveway! Tere and I looked at each other, looked back at the driveway, looked at each other, looked back at the driveway, and looked back at each other again. Then Tere, asked this wonderful question, "Well, where did YOU park the car?"

Laughing, I answered, "Right here in the driveway." Now we knew where we had parked the car, but we still walked outside, not quite believing it wasn't there, hoping that maybe the car had miraculously backed out the driveway and parked itself by the curb, but it hadn't.

Stunned, we called the police and filed a report that supposedly activated our high-tech tracking system. To be on the safe side, I also called the tracking system company. They assured me they had a 98 percent recovery rate within two hours. In two hours, I called again and asked, "Where's my car?"

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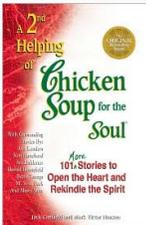


Again they answered, "We haven't found it yet, but we have a 90 percent recovery rate of finding it within eight hours." At that point I told them, "Your percentage rate means nothing to me when I'm in the small percentage, so call me when you find it." Later that day, a commercial aired on television with the automaker asking, "Wouldn't you like to have this car in your driveway?" I responded, "Sure I would! I had one yesterday."

As the day unfolded, Tere became increasingly upset as she remembered more and more of what had been in the car—our wedding album, irreplaceable family photos from past generations, clothes, all of our camera equipment, my wallet and our checkbooks, just to name a few. These were items of little importance to our survival, yet they seemed of major importance at that moment.

Anxious and frustrated, Tere asked me, "How can you joke about this when all of these things and our brand new car are missing?"

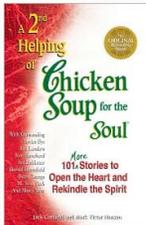
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I looked at her and said, "Honey, we can have a stolen car and be all upset, or we can have a stolen car and be happy. Either way, we have a stolen car. I truly believe our attitudes and moods are our choice and right now I choose to be happy."

Five days later (so much for the expensive tracing system) our car was returned without a trace of any of our belongings, and with over \$3,000 worth of damage to the car. I took it to the dealer for repair and was happy to hear they would have it back to us within a week.

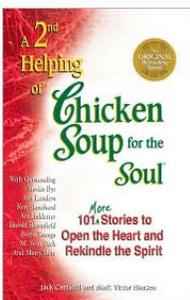
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At the end of the week, I dropped off the rental and picked up our car. I was excited and relieved to have our own car back. Unfortunately, these feelings were short-lived. On the way home, I rear-ended another car right at our freeway exit ramp. It didn't hurt the car I ran into, but it sure hurt ours--another \$3,000 worth of damage and another insurance claim. I managed to drive the car into our driveway, but when I got out to survey the damage, the left front tire went flat.

As I was standing in the driveway looking at the car, kicking myself in the tail for hitting the other car, Tere arrived home. She walked up to me, looked at the car, and then at me. Seeing I was beating myself up, she put her arm around me and said, "Honey, we can have a wrecked car and be all upset, or we can have a wrecked car and be happy. Either way, we have a wrecked car, so let's choose to be happy."

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Remembering that our beliefs always come back to us through our experiences, I surrendered with a hearty laugh and we went on to have a wonderful evening together. - Bob Harris