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A Quest for Joy: Do radically different this year

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Remember those **resolutions in reverse** [1]? And my resulting 2017 quest for JOY? Well, with my soul still sighing in relief for the time I took to rest in Him last week, I'm ever so slowly reinstating wellness. Careful not to lose what I gained, I'm inching into my workout routine and creating real-food recipes. While slowing down set the scene, I absolutely adore the tangible aspects of living well. So I'm finding ways to fit it in without sacrificing my 2017 intention abide in Him, ***the only place real JOY always resides.***

I'm afraid if move too fast this year's focus might fade away like most New Year resolutions. After all, the fast and furious separated me from my Savior and stole my joy. He ever abandoned me! It was my own mindless wandering from the path His presence permeates.

Have you ever done that? Lost your way in a world moving so fast you feel your feet sprinting and

your head spinning? Sometimes we don't even realize it until we feel an empty longing only fillable by getting right with God.

So here I am again, inviting you on a slow, steady 2017 quest to find the kind of joy calling for honesty, authenticity, everyday awareness and a desire to truly transform. Really, it's a journey towards Jesus and this joy we're after requires some work. Not because He withholds His joy but because it might hurt when you hunt down deep details in your heart that have been holding you back. It may sting when you realize you've been standing in your own way. You may even want to give up when it's time to stand up and stare humbly into your own reflection confessing you create stumbling blocks each time you try to take control away from Christ...*because you've been playing Savior*.

Or maybe I'm just preaching to myself when I say my own incapable hands hinder peace in my heart and happiness in my home. Perhaps I'm the only one guilty as charged for trying to play god by nagging until I'm nearly cross-eyed, attempting to create a self-proclaimed optimal outcome.

But I don't believe it's just me...

Don't we all either keep ourselves so busy we lose life's meaning or let the daily mundane muffle real joy?

The tough truth? ***Lost joy means we lack true trust for the only GOD good at being GOD.***

What's more? ***We allow Satan to trick us into trying to taking control because somehow our Creator isn't capable.*** We end up *worrying* about everything, *wanting* more or different than what God gives and *wandering* aimlessly into a wilderness where we can't hear His call and lose the joy of Jesus amongst the trees.

Worrying. Wanting. Wandering. A recipe for a suffocating soul, writhing in discontent and without the wisdom needed to live well the Lord's way.

And what's the purpose of living well when we've lost joy and forgotten it's ALL about glorifying the God of all good things?

We've all at some point unintentionally invited emptiness into our hearts and homes. Even when we only crack the door to Satan's lies, he slithers into our smallest, most vulnerable spaces and steals our joy*! He tests our trust in God, tells us we aren't enough, tricks us into believing we deserve more and rips us from soul-resting in our Savoir by urging us to strive for the world's version of wellness.*

Let's hold hands, defeat Satan's evil intentions and embark on a quest for reverse resolutions [1] and inside-out wellness [2] in the upside-down kingdom of Christ. Let's work for soul-rest and ban the burdens of over-commitment. Let's say NO to self-sabotage and stop listening to Satan's lies tell us we aren't enough yet we deserve more.

Let's stop letting stress and struggles steal our hearts because the joy of Jesus transcends any situation!

Sounds good, right? But where do we start?

We start by ***sifting through our hearts and creating space for Christ*** in our over-scheduled lives. We'll work on wellness, too. But before we make a move we've got to go in reverse where **soul-care** **[2]**matters before self-care. Before we tackle what to take for lunch or stand on the scale, before we take up fitness or focus on physical health, let's get right with God. I dare you to do things

radically differently this year!

- **Stand still.** Stop all the striving and sprinting. Slow your pace to create space for Christ, even if it means sacrifice.
- **Write rightness into your relationship with Him.** Literally. List all the ways you worry, want and wander. Record the lies you believe and counter each one with His truths as you put your trust in Him. **Here's a tool if you're ready to 'draft each day'.** **[3]**
- **Pray.** All day, every day. Direct your thoughts to Him, confess and ask Him to make your calling clear.
- **Clean House.** Purge anything keeping you from closeness to Christ and glorifying God. Clutter, over-commitment, taking on too many cares. Remove self-sabotage to clear the air for the coming joy!

I'd begun losing joy amidst worry, want and wandering, too. So together let's journey towards real Jesus-joy one joy-saturated step at a time. We'll pause to purify our intentions, praying for wisdom in our pursuit of wellness. We'll clean and declutter our hearts and homes to remove what distracts us from making space for soul-care. We'll reach deep into relationships, relinquish selfishness and remove what's been robbing us of authenticity. And sure, we'll include eating well and exercise, but in balance as a part of honoring God by living clean, joyful lives.

Step ONE: Realizing real wellness starts in your soul, in the sweet spot where the love of Jesus resides and the hand of the Holy Spirit guides. So, get started…go stand still to see what He has to say!

If you missed WHY we're going in REVERSE, read here: ***Resolutions in Reverse*** ***[1]***



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