



FIGHTING FOR

JOY

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 (NIV 1984)

Be joyful always.

ROMANS 12:12A (NIV 1984)

Be joyful in hope.

An aerial photograph of a vast mountain range. The mountains are layered, creating a sense of depth and scale. The foreground shows a valley with green fields and a winding road. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene and majestic. The text 'JOY IN HOPE' is centered over the image, with 'JOY' in a light blue serif font and 'IN HOPE' in a white sans-serif font, all enclosed within a white square frame.

JOY

IN

HOPE



I, Pencil By Leonard E Read, 1958.

Sincere love thrives on joyful hope

The sincerely loving are reliably joyful,
and the reliably joyful are full of hope.

1. Living sacrifices live off pleasure

John Piper's Summary: (Christian Hedonism)

"God is most glorified in you
when you are most satisfied in him."

Or you might say: (Romans 12)

"God is pleased in you
when you are joyful in him."

Mutual pleasure (especially Divine) can only be found in godliness (and by escaping worldliness)

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, **holy** and **pleasing to God**—this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer** to the **pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his **good, pleasing** and **perfect** will.

Logic of Hell and Hate:

The choice before us:

Pleasureful sin and
be happy now



Eternal misery
as punishment

Or...

Righteous misery
now



Eternal bliss in
pleasure then

(Therefore: many reject faith because this is obviously an idiotic choice)

Logic of Heaven and Love:

The choice is:

Sin and be
intermittently
miserable now
(miserable and a misery)



live in that
misery plus
deserved moral
judgment

Vs.

Be happy in
the good
and perfect
will of God



live in that
happiness
magnified
forever

2. Joy (& everything) must be rooted soberly in the good and perfect

Humility

Romans 12:3-5

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.** Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

A Direct Challenge

Who have you paid attention to since you walked in today?

(Who do your actions think/show is important?)

Worldliness



Spiritual Worldliness

Why does this matter?

Love and Joy

This is not some simple thing.

3. Sincere love requires a great power



Love has many sisters.

1. **Morally clear** – hates evil and clings to good
2. **Mutual devotion**- devotion and brotherly love
3. **Giving away superior honor**
4. **Joyful** in hope
5. **Patient** in affliction
6. **Faithful** to pray
7. **Share** with Christians who are in need
8. Practice **hospitality**
9. **Bless** those who persecute you and **do not curse** them
10. **Rejoice** with those who rejoice
11. **Mourn** with those who mourn
12. **Live in harmony** with one another
13. **Do not be proud** of status – associate with people of low status
14. Do **not be conceited**
15. **Do not repay** evil for evil
16. **Do what's right** in the eyes of everyone
17. **Live at peace** with everyone
18. **Do not take revenge**, ever.
19. **Love/serve** the people **you would naturally like to take revenge on**

We have to be sober minded
not just about what love is.

We have to be sober minded
about what it's going to take.

Some virtues (like Love and Joy) require other virtues:

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have **gained access by faith** into this grace in which we now stand. And **we rejoice** in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but **we also rejoice** in our sufferings, because we know that **suffering** produces perseverance; **perseverance, character**; and character, **hope**. And hope **does not disappoint** us, because **God has poured out his love into our hearts** by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

2 Peter 1:5

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your **faith** goodness,

to **goodness** knowledge,

to **knowledge** self-control,

to **self-control** perseverance,

to **perseverance** godliness,

to **godliness** brotherly kindness

to **brotherly kindness** love.

4. Sincere love is powered by spiritual zeal

The "fuel virtues"



1. Spiritual Zeal
2. Hopeful Joy
3. Enduring Patience
4. Faithful Prayer

No one can be soberly and sustainingly loving like Christ without these

Here they are again!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

Be joyful always; **Joyful in Hope**
pray continually; **Faithful in Prayer**
give **thanks in all circumstances**, **Patient endurance**
for this is **God's will** for you in Christ Jesus.
Do not put out the Spirit's fire; **Spiritual Zeal**

Meaning: "especially bad ones you have to endure"

These virtues are also described as disciplines.

That is:

They can be pursued through gracious striving.

But only on the basis of faith.

5 Practical Pursuits in pursuing Joy through Hope...

1. **Pursue godliness through faith**—I am a Living Sacrifice
2. **Know that God's will is not just perfect, but pleasing.** (to Him and us)
3. **Start with discernment**—see with humility and sober judgment.
4. **Don't take love lightly**—It will require great power
5. **Pursue virtue "foundationally"**—"build character from the bottom up or you'll give up."
6. **Cultivate spiritual zeal daily** with ferocity, vigilance, and community as training.