

How do you spell JOY?

If you were to ask a few church going people this question they would reply; “Well naturally it’s Jesus, others, yourself.” We make that statement at times as Christians and even preached it as preachers, but is it completely true? All I know is that we said it like we meant it, but this is how we lived it: “Others, others, others, others, Jesus.....then yourself.”

Well isn’t that the Christian thing to do? If you give or yourself till there’s nothing left for your own family to receive and enjoy, then the answer is no! If you give everything to everyone else and never do right by yourself, then the answer is no! If you are still trying to make others happy, but yet you yourself is sad and distressed, then the answer again, is no! If you’re paying everyone else’s bills (including the church) but you yourself is in debt, then no!

I personally know people in the church who were even told by their pastor not to pay “Child support”but yet they paid “Church support” in the thousands every couple of months. I am happy to say that at least one of those people has realized their error and has since taken up the responsibility of a true dad to his child. That’s just evil people! No other word for it. See, it goes to show what happens when you just “Obey” those who make it a point to be over you without thinking, making since of it, using wisdom and trusting in God. You can’t tell me that in this case, putting “Others first” was a smart move. And what a double standard, because “Others” also refers to your children and your family...well at least it should.

Oh, by the way, if you are skipping out on paying child support, you’re worse than an infidel, about to go to jail, not to mention hell. How can you in good conscience call yourself a Christian and not even take care of your own flesh and blood; a child that you brought into this world. Real Christ-like there pal! And please don’t tell me your pastor said not to take care of them because the child was born when you were a sinner. If that’s the case, don’t take care of him

because he was born a sinner. How do take someone else out to dinner (trying to get them to church) when you know that your own child goes without because you've damned yourself to believe a lie? Note: this is also a bad idea if you're trying to build up credit, because it will suffer if you make that child suffer by not paying up. Yes, this stuff actually goes on in some churches. Again, way too much control over a person. Pay up dead beat!

Note: This here really gets my goat, especially when the person has more than enough income coming in to support that child, but they chose to give that money to a church. I always thought that a child was your "Pride and joy," something that was cherished because they was very special. I never figured that it would be "Christians" who would abandon their children.

Well I guess if you look at it in a different ~~light~~ darkness, it would be more understandable. If that money is going to support someone else's child (pastor), that makes it just fine and dandy because we should honor the man of God instead of our obligation to our child. No, I don't think so! Have ye any bread to eat little children?

If you allow yourself to be open to everything without boundaries, then someone will always use and abuse you. Don't be so gullible all the time, learn to put your foot down when a situation becomes overbearing to you and your family. Stop letting people tell you what's right for you, when they themselves are messed up.

Get people out of your personal business; and that includes the pastor, brothers and sisters in the church and your nosy mom and dad or uncles and aunts. That's why it's called "**Your business,**" it's for you to handle. I guarantee you that Jesus handled His business all the time. It didn't matter who agreed or disagreed, Jesus backed down from "No one," including the Devil.

But if we supposedly have this same "Christ" living in us as Christians, then why are we so unlike Him in so many ways? Jesus laid down his life willingly so that we could have eternal life....no one else need do that again. When you or I willingly allow someone to nail our life to a post to be ridiculed and scorned, it serves as no purpose.

Sometimes we feel as though so many will be reached by our vain sacrifices, but they won't be. I'll deal with that in another article or recording entitled "He that winneth souls." In actuality, we waste more time trying to chase after people who don't want God, than focusing on the ones who do.

That's like a brother who has a wife and children, going to church, but none of them are even saved. And yet, that same man will drive 45 minutes just to pick someone up for church that only comes for the fishes and loaves. Meanwhile, all the family really wants and needs is just some attention from dad and they'll come around just fine. But you're too busy to even notice because everything else is more important. We should tell others about Jesus, but not at the expense of leaving the "Other" undone. If you ask me, you'd do better taking that time out for your family that's lost.

In some cases, the ones who do want God end up getting turned off or chased anyway because of "This, that, and the other." Once we do get them in the church "Faithfully," what then? My personal experience has been; we just ruin them, and make their life even more miserable than it was before they came to church. So what's the point? Is Jesus really first? Is our priority misplaced?

If someone asks you to do something that becomes too stressful, then don't do it. If someone "Expects" you to be somewhere at a certain day and time that is impractical, then don't show up. If your pastor makes you feel bad because he talked everyone else into doing something against their own will, but you got out of it, then you just need to "Stay out of it." I know we are supposed to obey those who have rule over us (blah, blah, blah), but are you a negro slave living under that much bondage where you can't even speak up for yourself? If you know like I know, you'd better run like the wind. That's not how I spell "Joy" any day of the week.

The Christian thing to do "Is" helping others and leading them to Christ, but it "Is not" becoming a permanent door mat fixture to be stepped on every day. I've helped so many people with so many things in my lifetime it phenomenal. And while some appreciated it, others didn't. There are times when people really helped me out also, and I'm very thankful for that. But the twist to that is this; I

shouldn't have been in the majority of those situations to begin with. Instead of using up all my credit cards to pay for hotels, airplane tickets and rental cars to go to conference twice a year, I should have just stayed home. But since it was a "Requirement" for any and all ministers to attend, I had no choice. Actually I **did have a choice**, I was just trying to be "Obedient," but I should have been more wise about the whole thing. Common sense wasn't so common for me back then, or any of us for that matter.

Even if you weren't granted permission from your employer to take the week off from work, you did it anyway or just quit the job altogether before you left for conference. And yes I did that too, actually several times to be more precise. So now after mounting this \$1500 bill on my credit cards, I had no job to even pay them down. On top of that, I still had a car payment, rent, Bible college, gas, electric, water and hospital bills to pay. Gee, I wonder why I lived with so much debt. No I don't! Take it from me, there's no joy in being in debt for most of your life. It's like a prison that can't be escaped. I don't care how much you pray and act like it doesn't faze you, it still does. As a preacher, I never expected to be rich or anything, but I didn't think I'd end up in debt up to my neck either.

When I do things for people, I don't look for notoriety, especially if it's a brother or sister in need. By nature I am a kind hearted person (believe it or not), but that in itself has caused me more grief than I care to even write about. Eventually I had to put a stop to letting everyone trod me under foot. It got to a point where there was practically nothing left of me to give, and as a result, I was now the one in need. One thing I will absolutely guarantee is that it will NEVER in my lifetime happen again.

So when do you have time to work out your own salvation in fear and trembling? We can get so busy trying to save everyone else on the planet when our own life ends up deteriorating. Not good! In fact, throughout the years, I've seen so many fail at life because they just gave and gave and gave, but never received all those misguided promises that were "Preached and prophesied" about. Yes, Gods word is true and he will do what he said he would do, but sometimes we just have to get to the right place and time to receive it.

Many an opportunity to be “Blessed” of God is forfeited because we keep allowing others access to what should be ours, and not there’s. There are things that God doesn’t want us to share with the church or others, and yet we still do it anyway because we feel “Pressured” to do so. Just because there’s a need in the church doesn’t mean you “Need” to give all the time. Don’t get me wrong, we should support our local church financially, but don’t become that person that the pastor looks to every time to meet financial obligations in the church. And for the record, I see nothing wrong with giving your pastor a “Love” offering to be a blessing to him. Now of course these things are contingent upon whether or not the pastor is actually being a “Pastor” or just a “Pestor.” It’s your call!

One might think that always putting others first is the key....tell that to your family who suffers because of it. You just keep on telling them that it’s for the “Will of the Lord” and I guarantee you are going to get burned out and quit. You might be saying, “No, not me!” Tell that to the multitude of people who already gave up serving God. I don’t know how many times I’ve said, “That’ll never happen to me....” and it happened. Or how about this one; “I’m never going to do that again.” Next week comes and oops! You did it once again.

I never thought I’d be writing any of this anti-church stuff. I always figured on being a preacher, praising the Lord, helping people while in the church, not outside of one. Never in my life time would I have considered the thought of my pastor turning his back on me and then to do it all over again only to have another pastor stab me in the back and lie on, around, under and behind me. Nonetheless, these things did and still do happen, and we don’t have to act as if they don’t and aren’t still happening. Many of us were shamed before those whom we taught, prayed for/with sang hymns with and even preached to. And yes, it does take some getting used to.

I guess that one would figure; “If anywhere on this planet, the Christian church would be the best place for me to be.” Wrong! You figured incorrectly. That’s a very poor assumption; that you or anyone will ever find help in a Christian church. No, I don’t believe that either, but I do believe people aren’t getting the help they deserve in Christian churches these days.

And why is it that so many “Believers,” “Be leaving?” And why is it that the “Others” in “Jesus, others, yourself” never means “Your spouse and children?” Someone please tell me why that is? Because those particular “Others” are the biggest part of the “Joy equation” in an individual’s life. If you can’t in all honesty say that you want your family to get to heaven more than anything in this world....I know....selfish right? Pardon me if I offend thee (sarcasm), I will make sure from now on I pray more for my contacts (those I’m trying to get to church) than my immediate Christian family (those who often go wanting due to unwarranted and untimely sacrifices placed upon them by their elders) that’s been through everything with me.

Never mind my wife (no don’t stop the sentence there)...who has stood by my side when others were busy mocking, talking crazy stuff about me, or just nowhere to be found. What I’m saying is that if you’re going to spend the extra time praying for a long list of people, fine, just make sure your husband, wife and children are all at the top, middle and bottom of the list. They’re going to be the ones who are there for you when times get tough. And trust me on this one; your wife will be the only one who will semi-understand what happened to you and why you are the way you are.

When you spend more time trying to help others with their salvation, while letting your own go South for the season, then something needs to be corrected. If we are more interested in pleasing the pastor or someone else of authority in the church more than we are God, then I would also say that’s a problem. I know of a lot of people who pretended to be happy for years, but they just weren’t. Not within themselves, about their surroundings, their finances and the list goes on; a list way too long for a sanctified Christian to have attached to them.

We were so busy proselyting everyone else that we never even stopped to see what our own relationship with Christ was like. Many times in the church the members are so caught up and busy so called helping others that they forget about themselves. Although this seems alright in the beginning, there are severe consequences if it gets out of control. Some get so involved in pleasing the pastor way too much by trying to attend every function that the church has and as a

result, they slowly deplete themselves of valuable personal time. Remember, there has to be a proper balance in “Everything.” Now that you know what I think about “Joy,” and how that we’ve approached it through the years, it’s up to you as an individual to form your own conclusions. I will leave you with this; don’t let anyone take your joy, no matter who or what it is. Peace be with you!