

## MAINTAINING THE SPIRIT OF REJOICING



David Wilkerson May 15, 2015

God had heard the Israelites' cry, and He had shown mercy to them, turning their mourning into mirth and allowing them to shout and rejoice. And now He called them to gather for yet another meeting.

If Israel's joy was to be maintained—if it was not to be lost once again—God had to dig a little deeper. Certain areas of people's lives still weren't conformed to His Word. Yet the Lord had allowed everyone to rejoice for a season, because He wanted them to know they were secure. Now, during this state of acceptance and joy, He asked them all to commit to a greater separation from the world.

God said to these joyful souls, "I am well pleased with you. You have revered My Word, repenting of your sin, rejoicing in My mercy, and promising to obey Me. Now, it's time for you to act on My love. I want you to separate yourselves wholly and break away completely from the worldly influences that have crept into your hearts and homes."

You see, while the Israelites were in captivity, they had become cozy with the heathen, slowly adopting their language and ways. Israelite men had married heathen wives, and Israelite women had purchased heathen husbands with dowries. The Israelites had also allowed unsanctified things to become a part of the worship in God's house.

Beloved, we can't go on to fullness in Christ if we don't increasingly separate ourselves from this world. If we're not becoming more heavenly minded and less like the unsaved people surrounding us, we'll slowly lose all the joy of our repentance.

Israel didn't want to lose their great spirit of rejoicing so they assembled again to obey God on this matter: "The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins" (Nehemiah 9:2).

"They . . . entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law. . . that [they] would not give [their] daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for [their] sons" (10:29-30).

How do we maintain the joy of the Lord? We do it the same way we obtained His joy in the beginning. First, we love, honor and hunger for God's Word. Second, we continually walk in repentance. And, third, we separate ourselves from worldly influences.

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