

Truth #2>>>

Discovering Your Joy: Your heart must be gripped by God's love for you

Think about something you own that you enjoy, something like an Xbox, iPod, cell phone, etc. **Do your parents ever have to ask you to play more Xbox, to listen to more music, or to text your friends more?** No. Those are things you enjoy doing. No one has to talk you in to doing them more.

Now, take a second and think about the stuff you have in your shower, like your soap, shampoo, or face wash. Do you get as excited about those things as you do about your Xbox or cell phone? The answer is, "no." No one gets pumped about owning toiletries. But, they are things you know you're going to need. And even though you don't get fired up about taking a shower, you're glad mom bought that bar of soap at the store.

Next, read Psalm 51:11-15, focusing in on verses 13-15. David wanted to be about teaching people the way of God and declaring praises to the Lord. Maybe you, too, have wanted to be about praising God and showing Him to others. But things get in the way. You lose focus, life gets crazy, and you forget about it. We know David had ups and downs in his spiritual journey, just like we do. So how did he expect for these desires to take root? For them not to just fade away, as usual? Let's back up a little and look at verse 12 where it says, "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." Think about that for a little while. *What does "joy of your salvation" mean?*

If you've been a Christian for a while, how easy is it for your salvation (or your relationship with Christ), to become routine rather than being a source of joy? **A lot of times we treat our salvation like we treat our soap or shampoo.** It's not as cool as our iPod or Xbox, but we know it comes in handy sometimes. It's nothing that gets us really fired up. But we know we need to go to church, or stay away from some certain sins, so we do it. It makes us feel like we take God seriously when we do these things. It makes us feel better about ourselves.

The problem, though, is that a lot of times there's no joy in it. Since there's no joy in it, our relationship with Christ becomes a list of rules to keep. We end up going one of two routes: 1) we either get sick of the rules and say, "forget this," or 2) we become arrogant about the fact that we keep (some of) the rules; we end up being a 21st century version of the Pharisees.

Go back to verses 13-15. If this is what we truly want our lives to be about, our relationship with Christ has to be a source of joy in our lives. It can't just be routine. We can never take our relationship with Christ for granted.

Follow Through>>>

- Spend some time reflecting on your relationship with Christ, on what it means for you to be saved from the punishment of your sins, and to be adopted into God's family. Think about the love and grace God has showered on you through Christ's death and resurrection. His unending love for us should be our motivation for obedience. Beg God to restore joy to your relationship with him.