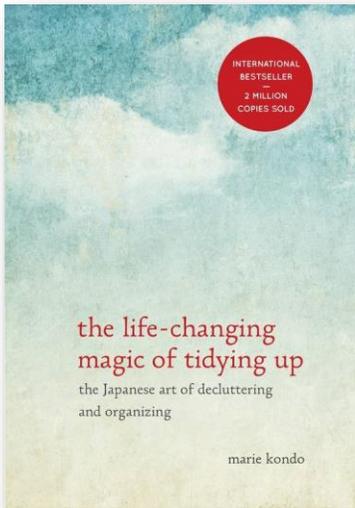


What comes to mind when you think of the word, "JOY"? Do you think of particular people, places, or experiences? Do you generally think about JOY at all?

Do you consider yourself to be a Joyful person? Do people who know you well consider you so?

I've been interested in the ways "Joy" has turned up in my world lately. It was certainly joyful to be with our two children, their spouses, and their five children over the past two weeks, but I was thinking about joy even before they came.



I think the first thing that caught my attention was Marie Kondo's best-selling book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. In that book, Marie instructs us to take everything we own, one piece at a time (beginning with clothes), hold it in our hands, and ask ourselves whether or not this item "sparks joy." "If it doesn't spark joy," she says, "then the way of joy is to get rid of it." While I haven't tried this myself, I understand her point, and many thousands of persons report that joy can be found in this process.

And then my friend, Rabbi Bernstein, asked me to read Richard Sheridan's book, *Joy, Inc.*, which is the story of the software company, Menlo Innovations. Menlo has been rated one of the Ten Best Places to Work IN THE WORLD, and the idea of joy is key to everything they do.

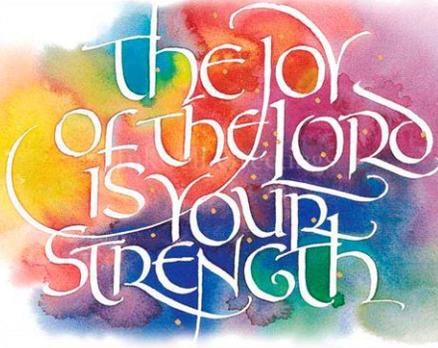
Sheridan's definition of joy is that "Joy is designing and building something that actually sees the light of day and is enjoyably used and widely adopted by the people for whom it was intended."<sup>1</sup>

As I continued my ponderings, I remembered that the coffee mug on my desk proclaims that "the JOY of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 6:10), and one translation of one of the Proverbs (that I can never locate when I want it) says that "For the joyful heart, it is festival always."

The idea of joy appears quite often in Scripture. Sometimes the idea of joy is applied to God's Law: "The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart" (Psalm 19:8).



<sup>1</sup> Richard Sheridan, *Joy, Inc. How We Built a Workplace People Love* (Portfolio/Penguin, 2015),



Quite often, **joy** is ascribed to the personified Creation as it revels in the **joy** of its Creator: “The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for **joy** and sing” (Psalm 65:13). “Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for **joy**” (Psalm 96:12). “Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for **joy**” (Psalm 98:8).

God’s own **joyfulness**—the **Source of Joy**—infuses both Creation and Scripture with **Joy**:

“Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and **joy** are in his dwelling place” (1 Chronicles 16:27). “Jesus, full of **joy** through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children’” (Luke 10:21). “I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete” (John 15:11).

**Joy** is frequently associated with our experience of God’s forgiveness and salvation: “With **joy** you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3). “I will **rejoice** in the Lord, I will be **joyful** in God my Savior” (Habakkuk 3:18). “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his **joy** went and sold all he had and bought that field” (Matthew 13:44).

“May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). “Though you have not seen [Jesus], you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious **joy**, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8-9).

And now, to take this in one more direction, **how would you rate your own life as a follower of Jesus on a joy scale of 1-10? How about your life as a part of CBF?** I suggest to you that if your life in Christ is not a consistent source of fulfillment and **joy**, you’re missing the real point of life.



Jesus said that He wanted us to have “the full measure of [his] **joy**” (John 17:13). And this **joy** is one that no hardship or suffering can take away (Hebrews 12:2). The keys to this **joy** are neither hidden nor complex. They are the five things we talk about all the time,<sup>2</sup> and this is the reason we talk about them: they lead to **JOY!**

**DO THE FIVE THINGS.** You’ll be GLAD you did!

Dave

<sup>2</sup> **WORSHIP! CONNECT! GROW! SERVE! GO!**

