

# Grace *focus*

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## The Real Deal

*“The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with JOY!”*

Fall and fairs seem to go hand in hand. Funnel cakes, fast rides for nuts, carnival games and caramel apples with nuts. Have you ever paid the outrageous price to get in the gate just to buy one of those overpriced apples? Yes, you can buy caramel apples in the grocery store, or make them yourself at home, but the carnival caramel apples seem to come with a built in smile. Only when you stand in a long line in front of the trailer with a happy apple sign painted on the side, in the pouring rain, and hand the seemingly unhappy carnie five bucks, do you know you have the real deal. Last week my son brought me one of those apples home from the fair. I smiled. I remembered a story my mother told about when she was a little

girl, how she had taken her mom a half eaten apple home. I imagine she smiled.

This fall as we think of all we have to smile about we should smile. We have the real deal walking hand in hand with us every single day. Whether we are standing still in the pouring rain in a seemingly unending line, or moving really fast through this life, God is with us. He loves us and cares for us every single day. He smiles when we bring the very best we have to offer home to Him. He never overcharges to enter in. The joy He offers is priceless. He is the real deal. Smile and take the time to enjoy the ride this fall.

**THE LORD  
HAS DONE  
GREAT THINGS  
FOR US AND  
WE ARE FILLED  
WITH JOY**  
*{psalm 126:3}*

# Delight in Obedience to Gods Will

Consider the illustration of two coal mine workers who have the same difficult, dangerous job. The first despises his occupation with a passion and often remains idle at work simply for the sake of rebellion against his inconsiderate boss. As a result of his idleness, the days seem to drag on and he can't wait to punch out. The second man (unlike the first) is very grateful for his job. He is thankful that in this economy he is able to provide food for his family and a roof over their heads. Because of this he works diligently. His days go by

quickly for him and he actually enjoys the time! If we as Christians live our lives obeying and serving the Lord with zeal and gratitude like the second coal miner served in his occupation, we will find that we can experience joy in a submitted life. More and more our joy will not be in doing our own will but in doing the will of our Lord. When we obey God's word and cherish His will over our own, we will delight in it. Psalms 1:2 "his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night." Can you imagine what a

life like that would look like?! If we didn't have to fight ourselves to do God's will, but if we took joy in it? It would be like the story of Jacob's service to Laban: Genesis 29:20 "Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her." Consider Jacob - who broke his back for seven years working for Laban. His mind was on his love (Rachel) the whole time, and they years flew by. He had joy knowing what was coming to Him. So this should be our attitude when denying ourselves and obeying God. We desire our Lord so much, that to prefer others to ourselves is a joy because we glorify the Lord by doing this. When I let someone else take the praise at work, I glorify God. When I give someone else the right of way

Proverbs 22:17

*"A merry heart does good like medicine"*

1 John 5:3 - "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome"

on the road, I glorify the Lord. When I clean the church gladly with not one word of thanks, I glorify the Lord. We don't do all this to glorify ourselves, but to please the Lord - and that is our joy because He is our first love.

1 John 5:3 - "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome" God's commandments should not be burdensome to us - they should be our joy.

Let us serve the Lord joyfully for our first love like Jacob served joyfully for Rachel - looking forward to the promise.

## Sunday School

I've spent my entire life going to camp. This is not, by any means, an exaggeration! I loved camp, and still do. Our youth had an amazing time this summer at camp! They came home with some awesome stories full of fun, laughter and life-changing moments with the Lord.

It's about this time every year that school starts to become less exciting and more mundane. It can become exhausting and stressful for some. In the midst of school, it can be easy to fall back into old habits that God may have started dealing with at camp this Summer. Let's remember to encourage our youth at this point in the year. You never know when your reaching out will make a huge impact!

-Drea

