

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the subject of sorrow. I hope it doesn't discourage you, but everybody will go through sorrow. Even conversion to Christ does not eliminate sorrow. In fact, sometimes following Christ is a recipe for sorrow. Remember, for example, that when Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ, the man who baptized him showed him how many things he would suffer because of his faith (Acts 9:16).

The late John Lyttle was a faithful preacher and close friend. He preached many years at Diamond, Missouri. Among the many things he suffered was the untimely death of three of his children. One son, James Douglas Lyttle, died from leukemia Nov. 16, 1961. In only 5 days he would have been three years old. John composed the following poem in his honor.

'Twas night and we sat on the door step, just me and my boy of three.
And we talked of the night and the dark and the stars, 'course mostly the talker was me.
For I was far older and wiser and knew things he couldn't yet know,
And he listened with childish amazement, what Daddy said had to be so.
Then I pointed my hand up to heaven and said, 'see them shining so far,
for tonight they all know that a Daddy will be showing his boy each star'.

And tonight - as I sit on the door step. Just me - there's no boy of three.
And I look at the night and the dark, and the stars, and I cry, 'cause he's taken from me.
And someone far older and wiser, looks down on His child in bereavement,
And with Him a boy of three. And I fancy my boy up in heaven says,
'now wipe that tear from your eye, for tonight I am showing my Daddy
to each star up here in the sky.'

The suffering John experienced, however, did not rob him of joy. All Christians experience joy! Peter described the Christian life as being filled with "inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Pet. 1:8). Paul's letter to the Philippians has 5 references to joy and 11 references to rejoicing. Remarkably, this letter was written from prison. So, the sorrow John experienced certainly did not rob him of joy. One humorous story beautifully illustrates this point. Many years ago both our families attended in Tulsa. At noon, both our families were both eating at Casa Bonitas. Out of the many delightful enclaves in the restaurant, the Lyttles were eating at the "waterfall", and we were nearby. They were laughing so hard, and having so much fun, that we overheard a couple say to the waiter: "Whatever they're drinking, we want some of it".

The Lyttle's, of course, were not drinking any alcohol, they were merely manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Remember! The fruit of the Spirit is: "**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**" (Gal 5:22-23) When you have the Holy Spirit you can have "joy" and every other good thing no matter how much trouble you have.

Jesus never promised that following Him would be easy. He said:

- **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)**
- **“you will be hated by all nations because of me” (Matt 24:9)**
- **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)**
- **“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)**

Paul presented a simple recipe for contentment to the Philippians which will still work in your lives today. **“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:4-7)**

Note: (1) Don't be anxious about anything. (2) In everything by prayer and petition , with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (3) The peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard y our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6,7).

Try it!

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce