

Longing for Joy

LONGING @ LIGHT | WEEK 2 | AMANDA BEGGS

Our deepest longings cannot be outsourced but they also can't be ignored.

An important part of the spiritual life is to keep longing, waiting, hoping, expecting. In the long run, some voluntary penance becomes necessary to help us remember that we are not yet fulfilled. A good criticism, a frustrating day, an empty stomach, or tired eyes might help to awaken our expectation and deepen our prayer: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

- Henri Nouwen

Joy is found in a brand new identity.

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Through Jesus, we are given the right to become children of God.

Literary Chiasm in John 1:1-18 →

The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God. - C.S. Lewis

Often we confuse the Universal Fatherhood of God with the Universal Creatorhood of God.

John 1:1-18

Nature v.1-3

Overflow v.4-5

Witness v.6-9

Children v.10-13

Witness v.14-15

Overflow v.16-17

Nature v.18

John 1:10

He was in the world, and the world was made through him (Universal Creatorhood of God), **yet the world did not know him.**

Creation = existence relationship = identity

John 1:11

He came to his own, and his own people (the Jews) **did not receive him.**

Religiosity and morality do not make someone a child of God.

John 1:12

But to all who did **receive** him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

His name = His word and character

Children of God = those who believe and receive

John 1:13

Who were born (spiritual birth), not of blood nor of the will of the flesh (not something we can inherit or earn) nor of the will of man, but of God (born again, John 3:3).

God doesn't just invite us to believe in Him but to belong to Him.

Question: Do I approach God as His child, or do I view Him as a distant authority figure?

→ **What we call someone shapes how we approach them.**

→ **What we call someone reveals what we believe about our relationship with them.**

Jesus came to give us access to God, not only as Creator or as Judge, but as Everlasting Father.

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

In the ancient world, sons received the inheritance and the family name. Adoption has legal and relational element:

- our penalty has been legally removed
- we can call God Father

To be right with God the judge is a great thing, to be loved by God the Father is greater. The highest privilege of the gospel is adoption.

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. For everything that Christ taught...is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God.

- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

→ **Joy begins by recognizing our identity as a son of God.**

Gifts that we receive as children of God:

1. Unconditional acceptance
2. Unrestricted, intimate access

AS A CHILD OF GOD, I HAVE UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE. _____

Your earthly father is not the model of your heavenly Father. God is the perfect completion of everything a Father is meant to be.

Prodigal Suspicion: I'm no longer worthy to be called God's child.

My Father always runs toward me, not away from me.

Question: Where am I still trying to earn what God has already given me?

Question: Where am I approaching Him like a servant instead of a son or daughter?

We don't have to earn God's acceptance, we just have to come home to it.

AS A CHILD OF GOD, I HAVE UNRESTRICTED, INTIMATE ACCESS. _____

Jesus came to restore what was lost in the garden, to change who has access to God.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Question: Am I living as an orphan?

As followers of Jesus we carry the brokenness and pain of the world in one hand and the joy that comes from our eternal relationship with Him in the other hand.

My Child,

You may not know me,

But I know everything about you. *Psalm 139:1*

I know when you sit down and when you rise up. *Psalm 139:2*

I am familiar with all your ways. *Psalm 139:3*

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. *Matthew 10:29-31*

For you were made in my image. *Genesis 1:27*

In me you live and move and have your being. *Acts 17: 28*

For you are my offspring. *Acts 17: 28*
 I knew you even before you were conceived. *Jeremiah 1:4-5*
 I chose you when I planned creation. *Ephesians 1:11-12*
 You were not a mistake. *Psalms 139:15-16*
 For all your days are written in my book. *Psalms 139:16*
 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. *Acts 17:26*
 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. *Psalms 139:13*
 I knit you together in your mother's womb. *Psalms 139:14*
 And brought you forth on the day you were born. *Psalms 71:6*
 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. *John 8:41-44*
 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. *1 John 4:16*
 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. *1 John 3:1*
 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. *1 John 3:1*
 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. *James 1:17*
 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. *Matthew 6:31-33*
 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. *Jeremiah 29:11*
 Because I love you with an everlasting love. *Jeremiah 31:3*
 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. *Psalms 139:17-18*
 And I rejoice over you with singing. *Zephaniah 3:17*
 I will never stop doing good to you. *Jeremiah 32:40*
 For you are my treasured possession. *Exodus 19:5*
 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. *Jeremiah 32:41*
 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. *Jeremiah 33:3*
 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. *Deuteronomy 4:29*
 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. *Psalms 37:4*
 For it is I who gave you those desires. *Philippians 2:13*
 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. *Ephesians 3:20*
 For I am your greatest encourager. *2 Thessalonians 2:16-17*
 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your trouble. *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*
 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. *Psalms 34:18*
 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. *Isaiah 40:11*
 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. *Revelation 21:3-4*
 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. *Revelation 21:4*
 I am your Father and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. *John 17:23*
 For in Jesus my love for you was revealed. *John 17:26*
 He is the exact representation of my being. *Hebrews 1:3*
 And He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. *Romans 8:31*
 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. *2 Corinthians 5:18-19*
 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. *2 Corinthians 5:18-19*
 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. *1 John 4:10*
 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. *Romans 8:32*
 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. *1 John 2:23*
 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. *Romans 8:38-39*
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