Living Joy! Reflection – Week 5

Rule #4 Have Fun

Rule #5 Engage Your Body in the Battle For Joy

By Janet Jones and based on Living Joy: 9 Rules to Help You Rediscover and Live Joy Every Day by Chris Stefanick. Emmaus Road Publishing. 2020. (All quotes and page numbers are from the book unless otherwise noted.)

Quotes to Ponder:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? —1 Corinthians 6:19

“In short: He is risen. Tell your face.” Chris Stefanick p. 93

Let’s Get Started:

We are covering two chapters this week because Rule #4 is very simple: Have Fun! Really? Yes- that’s it. We are more open to JOY if we take life and ourselves a lot less seriously and engage ourselves in whatever pastime we enjoy. Even if it feels like you are wasting time – have fun! When my son was born, and I was back working a full-time job - I was in desperate need of an outlet. I signed up for a basket weaving class. Like I really needed one more thing to do - but I found weaving baskets very therapeutic, and I could do it after he was in bed and the long day was winding down. I discovered that I love to have fun creating crafty things and have continued crafting in one way or another since then. So have fun! Step away from the worries of your world for a bit and have fun! Do not just take my word for it. Chris states, “I’m not saying you shouldn’t deal with your issues, but don’t take yourself so seriously all the time. You’ll find tremendous power to take on your issues in that mindset.” (pg. 86)

Rule#5: Engage Your Body in the Battle for Joy! While JOY is a spiritual gift, we must remember that we have a body, too. As Chris points out, “Your body has a lot to do with your pursuit of joy because it’s a big part of who and what you are and increasing feelings of happiness and well-being on a bodily and neurobiological level make the battle for a deeper, spiritual joy easier to win.” (pg. 89) Let’s explore the 3 ways Chris encourages us to engage our body:

#1 Change your position/Change your disposition: Have you ever seen a slumped-over superhero? Chris tells the story of encouraging his daughter who felt left out on the playground. His words can help us as well: “Every room you walk into, I want you to walk in like you’re ready to bless people.” (p. 91) He goes onto say, “Put your smile on, back straight, shoulders back, chest out. You’re there to bless. Your heavenly Father is King of the Universe, and you’re the apple of his eye. That makes you royalty: a King’s favorite son or most beloved daughter.” (p. 91) He continues, “You need to stop being the passenger of your passing thoughts and moods, letting them drive you through life. Don’t call “shotgun.” Get in the driver’s seat. Your mood should not dictate how you carry yourself—this should be determined by how you want to feel, because the way you carry yourself has the power to inform you how to think and feel.” (p. 91) Engage your whole body in the quest for JOY. Act the way you want to feel! As the adage goes - “fake it till you make it.”
#2 Smile: We have the best news that can be spread throughout the world: Christ is risen! Death has been overcome. No matter what troubles befall us, nothing can separate us from the love of God. For goodness sake - SMILE! Chris cites different research that shows the benefits of smiling on our brain. Smiling helps release those feel-good chemicals that help us feel JOY. Plus, a smile can have such a positive impact on another person. “Mother Teresa once said, ‘We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.’” (pg. 94)

#3 Exercise: Chris reminds us that, “Our bodies were made to move.” (p. 95) Studies have shown that exercise can help alleviate depression symptoms. “…exercise kicks off a whole concoction of happy-making neurological and hormonal processes that make our lives not only longer but also more enjoyable.” (p. 95)

Let’s have fun while we stand tall, backs straight, shoulders back, smile, and get moving!

Questions to ponder:
1. What is your idea of fun? How do you exercise?
2. Think of a time where you had a lot of fun or engaged your body is something strenuous. How did you feel afterwards?
3. Were you aware of the connection between having fun and/or engaging your body and the battle for deep spiritual joy?
4. Picture yourself walking into a room - in what ways can you be a blessing to other people?

How-to’s from Chris (pgs.96-103):
- There is no “How-To” for having fun - just have fun!
- Smile more - smile at the people you meet, and smile at yourself as well
- Set when and where you are going to work out, exercise or just move around
- Make your body an offering - if you are unable to work out, exercise or just move around, offer it up to God.
- Sleep – try to get a good night’s sleep based on the amount your body needs. If needed, take a nap.

Join me in praying this prayer for JOY:

Heavenly Father, I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will declare all your wondrous deeds. I will delight and rejoice in you; I will sing hymns to your name, Most High. You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever. I trust in your faithfulness. Grant my heart joy in your help, that I may sing of the LORD, “How good our God has been to me!”

Father, help me to remain in your love.

So that your joy may be in me and my joy may be complete.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.