

### SMALL TALK

1. Describe a time of joy in your life? What did you rejoice over?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Philippians 4:4.** Under what circumstances does Paul write this? How is this possible? How might **Psalm 119:162** point us in the right direction?
3. What five or six BIG bold prayer requests did Paul pray in **Ephesians 3:14-19**? What does he believe about God and proclaim in **Ephesians 3:20-21** that fuels such big bold prayers?
4. **READ 2 Corinthians 3:16–18, and Ephesians 2:10.** What promises do you see in these verses to receive and rejoice over? How does someone move from “freedom” into “glory”, and from “glory” to greater “glory”?

### GETTING PERSONAL

5. What promise from God has encouraged you lately? How so?
6. Can you describe your spiritual growth in stages of “glory”, from “glory to glory”? What does this look like? And if not, why not?

7. What might you pray for with the promises of Ephesians 3:20-21 to help you?

**PRACTICE!**

8. What promise would you like to “receive,” and “rejoice” over?

January 16, 2022

## A Promising Year 2-REJOICE in God's Promises

In 2014 while walking their dog on their property, a California couple noticed a half-buried rusty can on the side of the path that contained a stash of gold coins, the couple repeatedly returned to the site, finding more cans, and more coins, with each trip. The total hoard comprised 1,411 gold coins from the 1800s worth an estimated \$10 million. Both the location of the land and the couple's identity have been kept secret, but the treasure has been dubbed the Saddle Ridge Hoard after a unique identifying feature on the couple's property.

I tell you this story to highlight a truth we read in Psalms.

*Psalm 119:162 (CSB) I rejoice over your promise like one who finds vast treasure.*

### I. Rejoice like one who **FINDS TREASURE**

Do you want to rejoice? You need to go on a treasure hunt for God's promises.

A “*treasure hunt*” implies that finding is not by accident.

*Matthew 7:7-8 (CSB) “... Seek, and you will find. ...the one who seeks finds...”*

If you don't seek it, you may not find it.

Have you ever been reading along in the Bible and at first it feels like you are like a miner shoveling dirt in the dark looking for the gems. You have a dim **headlamp** on your head as you look [ **put on** ]. Can you imagine the payoff however if suddenly something shines gleaming back at you. Then you brush off the dirt to find gleaming treasure. There is great joy in the discovery of a promise that is just what you needed.

I was once facing a tangled problem and I had no clue how to fix it. It felt big, it felt dark, and to be honest my perspective and the anxieties my perspective caused were part of my problem.

But I was working at memorizing God's Word, and when I needed it, I ran into the perfect promise to claim. So I put it in my Bible Memory app to include it in my memorization discipline. So, I camped on this one and began incorporating it into my prayers. I recommend it to you.

*Ephesians 3:20–21 (NIV) Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

I began to pray, “Lord, I don’t even know what to ask. Would you please do immeasurably more than all I have been asking? Would you please do more than I can even imagine?” I began praying that way. I joined hands with my wife and prayed that way. And guess what? He did more than I knew how to ask or imagine! It produced a lovely surprise answer.

God’s promises are treasures. Receive them. Rejoice in them. Remember them. Rehearse them.

*Skye Jethani shares a story from a trip he took to India with his father. While walking the streets of New Delhi, a little boy approached them. He was "skinny as a rail, and naked but for tattered blue shorts. His legs were stiff and contorted, like a wire hanger twisted upon itself." Because of his condition, the little boy could only waddle along on his calloused knees. He made his way toward Skye and his father and cried out, "One rupee, please! One rupee!" Skye describes what happened when his father eventually responded to the boy's persistent begging:*

*"What do you want?" [my father asked].*

*"One rupee, sir," the boy said while motioning his hand to his mouth and bowing his head in deference. My father laughed.*

*"How about I give you five rupees?" he said. The boy's submissive countenance suddenly became defiant. He retracted his hand and sneered at us. He thought my father was joking, having a laugh at his expense. After all, no one would willingly give up five rupees. The boy started shuffling away, mumbling curses under his breath.*

*My father reached into his pocket. Hearing the coins jingle, the boy stopped and looked back over his shoulder. My father was holding out a five-rupee coin. He approached the stunned boy and placed the coin into his hand. The boy didn't move or say a word. He just stared at the coin in his hand. We passed him and proceeded to cross the street.*

*A moment later the shouting resumed, except this time the boy was yelling, "Thank you! Thank you, sir! Bless you!" He raced after us once again—but not for more money but to touch my father's feet. ...*

Is that you? Do you treat God like he has very little to offer you? When was the last time you searched and searched for promises like treasures! Are all of your prayer requests, beggar's prayer requests? Are you boldly asking for big things only God can do?

## **II. Rejoice! We can REFLECT God's GLORY**

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul made reference to Exodus 34 when Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets of the Old Covenant. Moses didn't know it but the time he spent with God personally had changed his appearance. His face shined with glory. At first it frightened the people, so even as that glory was fading Moses wore a veil over his face.

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*2 Corinthians 3:16–18 (NLT) But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

We don't see the true glory, until the veil is taken away! Remember the headlamp illustration. We are given something better than the headlamp, and we are no longer digging in the dark! Those who turn to the Lord have been given the Holy Spirit to help us find treasures to understand, and apply!

*<sup>17</sup> For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*

The reason for this is that the Old Covenant was with the letter of the law, and it came with condemnation, where we fell short. But the New Covenant, comes with forgiveness, a life from the Spirit, power to set us free.

*<sup>18</sup> So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord.*

The veil is what keeps us from seeing God's glory, God as our source, our life, our supply, our salvation, our hope! When you don't see this, you try doing life on

your own. But when the veil is removed, and you come to God and see his glory... we read this..

*And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

**Walking and praying in the predawn desert morning out at Dead Horse park on Friday,** I noticed some clouds above the canyon I was in begin to reflect the color of the rising sun... my thoughts and prayers before God took a turn that went something like this.

- Light is what makes seeing color possible.
- Light is what makes beauty possible.
- God, you are the giver of light. You are the light of the world.
- Beauty as a gift comes from you. There is no beauty apart from you, because apart from you there is only darkness.
- Light & beauty ... Some people, by the world's standards, appear to be more beautiful than others, but I've noticed that when a beautiful person does not reflect your glory, they are not beautiful. In fact there is an ugliness that is very dark, as the beauty has become an ugly self centered thing. Beauty that is not reflecting God... is ugly, and dark.
- This same truth is there for any gift you give. Whether it is the gift of Strength, or intelligence. When people with these gifts do not reflect your glory, their gifts are diminished, and remain in the dark.

*2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) ... the Lord...makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

### III. Rejoice! We are his MASTERPIECE

*Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

- **DON'T misunderstand this promise.** Don't turn it into: "**Look at me!**". I'm a masterpiece! (kid's stuff)
- Self promoting – "**Look at me**" is very big today.
- **But that isn't what we are made for.**

It's time we grew up. We were made to live a life that says, "**Look at God!**" People are to look at us and see not us but the image of our Maker.

We are made in his image to reflect him.

We need people to see through the reflected image beyond “**me**” to know the God we know, love, and reflect.