

Secrets to Long-Term Freshness: A Grace Coloured Approach to Life and Ministry

Disappointment, weariness, boredom, anger, and frustration threaten to deprive joy and enthusiasm about the ministry in the lives of many servants of Christ. This workshop uses the experiences of the leader in over 39 years of ministry and Scriptural principles to suggest ways to help Christian workers maintain their spiritual glow and enthusiasm about the ministry.

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I. Christian life and ministry is all of mercy

A. 2 Corinthians 4:1

1. God equips us so that we can persevere (4:1)
 - a. Colossians 1:29 Toil, struggle, and enabling

2. We renounce worldly methods (4:2)
 - a. Colossians 3:1-2 Grace has lifted us up to a new plane

3. We look for God's approval (4:2b)

4. Our weakness magnifies God's greatness (4:7)

B. We want only to magnify God through life

1. No competition and jealousy

2. A real danger in ministry
 - a. Mark 9:33-37
 - b. Mark 10:32-45
 - c. Luke 22:24

3. Jealousy can destroy people

4. An insecure source of satisfaction
5. Freedom from a passion to show off is freedom to enjoy Jesus

C. We can climb by our own efforts

1. We forfeit God's anointing
2. The folly of living for show
 - a. Matthew 6:2, 5, 16
3. We learn to fear this trap

II. Thanksgiving and Joy

A. Thanksgiving

1. 2 Corinthians 2:14
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
3. Life is loaded with praise Psalms 34:1-2

B. Joy

1. Philippians 4:4
2. OT: 23 different words for joy

C. The *Chai-Ro* Family

1. *Charis*—Grace
2. *Charisma*—Gift
3. *Eucharistia*—thanks
4. *Chara*—joy
5. *Charizomai*—to freely give, to forgive
 - a. Ephesians 4:32
 - b. Colossians 3:13
 - c. Grace makes us gracious

- D. First joy; then sacrificial service (John 15:11—12-13)
- E. Our joy is the joy of being graced
- F. Realising God delights in us
 - 1. Psalms 35:27
 - 2. Psalms 41:11
 - 3. Psalms 44:3
 - 4. Psalms 147:11
 - 5. Psalms 149:4
 - 6. Isaiah 62:4
- G. He exults over us with loud singing! (Isaiah 62:4)
- H. The smile of God takes the shame away (Psalms 34:5)
- I. What's most important: not what we do for God, but what God does for us
- J. We must keep getting grace daily.
 - 1. "Grace and Peace" in Paul's and others' epistles
 - 2. Lamentations 3:21-23
 - 3. Approaching life with a hunger for God (Matthew 5:6-6)

III. Comfort

- A. The wounds of ministry are painful
- B. They need healing
- C. Otherwise we will be angry (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- D. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 – A key to healing is God's comfort
- E. The pathway of groaning
 - 1. Romans 8:19-23
 - 2. E.g. Laments
 - 3. Sometimes we groan to friends (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
 - 4. Groaning: the alternative to quitting

- F. Comfort takes away the bitter edge of pain
 - 1. Jacob (Genesis 32:26)
 - 2. Joseph's tears (8 times)

- G. This is different to grumbling
 - 1. People who don't want to obey
 - 2. People who are angry

- H. There are levels of joy
 - 1. Philippians 4:4 →2:2→4:2
 - 2. Accepting the incompleteness of joy is good

- I. God's peace guards us
 - 1. Philippians 4:7
 - 2. Colossians 3:15
 - 3. We won't overreact

- J. We do our part and leave for God to comfort

- K. Maturity: combining joy with a broken heart

- L. We must preach to ourselves Psalms 42-43

- M. Some exceptional situations
 - 1. Clinical depression
 - 2. Demonic depression
 - 3. Seasonal issues
 - 4. Part of personality

- N. Otherwise wait for it to clear
 - 1. While waiting, don't feel bad about feeling bad!