

**Joyful in Hope – 43 – May 6, 2020**  
**(thoughts and ideas to encourage and challenge)**  
*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”*  
*Romans 12:12*

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## **Guidelines for Spiritual Renewal – Rick Warren**

I receive an email every week from Rick Warren, who pastors the Saddleback Church in California. It's geared towards people in ministry, but there's plenty Rick says that everyone could benefit from hearing. When spiritual renewal happens in your life, you're reminded that it's not about religion, ritual, rules, and regulations. It's about a relationship with Jesus. All of a sudden, you realize that God doesn't just love you—he likes you, too! How can you experience this kind of renewal? Here are seven practical suggestions:

### **Learn to enjoy the grace of God.**

Never get over the truth that everything God does through you, by you, and for you, he does by grace through faith. Every bit of his work in your life is a gift. Satan likes to whisper in our ears that we're not good enough. But grace tells us that God knows every stupid mistake, and he still chooses to use us. If we don't understand this, we'll get caught in a performance trap. Some people preach grace their entire lives but have never felt the unconditional, unrelenting love of God. When you experience this kind of love, it will change your life.

### **Be authentic.**

Don't go around pretending to be something you're not. You need to be who God made you to be. If you try to live your life for the expectations and approval of others, you'll always be under stress. You'll fear being exposed. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:2, *“We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God”* (NIV). Paul had nothing to hide. He was completely transparent. If we want personal revival in our lives, we have to be transparent and honest with ourselves and others.

### **Remember it's not about you.**

When you forget it's not about you, everything becomes personal. If you're in ministry for yourself or the approval of others, you'll either get bitter or prideful—and you will not last. Paul is crystal clear about why he is in ministry: *“For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake”* (2 Corinthians 4:5 NIV). Paul lived for an audience of one.

### **Accept your human limitations.**

You can't fix everyone's problems. The person who is available to people all the time isn't worth much when he's there. Even Jesus couldn't be everywhere at once when he was here on earth. So why would you think you could be at four different meetings at the same time? Know your limits. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:7, *“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us”* (NIV). Our frail bodies are like jars of clay. When you drop a clay pot, it breaks. We're all flawed—and a bit cracked. That's okay. God uses our frailty.

### **Do everything out of love.**

You may preach great sermons, lead great groups, and counsel people effectively, but if you don't have love, it's not worth anything. To last in ministry, you need to do everything out of love. I'm never impressed when

pastors tell me how much they love to preach. I don't care if you love to preach. I want to know if you love the people to whom you're preaching. I've met a lot of pastors who like crowds and hate people. They want an audience, but they're cold fish when you get them around people.

### **Make time for regular renewal.**

I once owned a car that lasted for 20 years because I had it serviced regularly. If you're not taking care of yourself regularly, you won't last 20 years in the ministry.

I recommend following this little formula:

- **Divert daily.** Do something fun every day that relieves stress.
- **Withdraw weekly.** Take a sabbath every week.
- **Abandon annually.** Get away for a vacation every year.

You won't accidentally develop balance in your life. You need a plan. You also need a partner to help keep you accountable.

### **Learn to live in light of eternity.**

Vince Lombardi used to say, "Fatigue makes cowards of all of us." I think the last few months we can all echo those words. When Jesus faced the toughest time of his earthly life, he set his eyes on eternity. Hebrews 12:2 says of Jesus, "*Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame*" (NLT). You can only accomplish the impossible when you look at the invisible. If you focus on your problems, you're going to be overwhelmed.

It's always a good time to pursue personal renewal, but it's particularly important right now. I pray that during these days you fall in love with Jesus in a fresh way!

**Reminder – Join us for Heritage Prayers, this evening at 7 PM.**