



WHAT GIVES A WOMAN STRENGTH AND JOY?

(Six characters are needed: Interviewer, Today's Woman, and four readers of Scripture. The stage could be set as a "talk show" set with two comfortable chairs and possibly a small table between, or use stool-type chairs.)

Interviewer: Welcome to "Christian Experience." Our topic today is "What Gives a Woman Strength and Joy?"

We are privileged, and I personally am excited to have with us as our guest, a very multi-talented woman. I believe many of us will, in one way or another, be able to identify with her experiences. In her personal walk of faith, our guest has discovered some important lessons. As she relates ideas and insights with us, perhaps we will be able to share them with others we know who have found themselves in similar circumstances. Please welcome our guest, "Today's Woman." *(Today's Woman walks on stage dressed for success, neat, confident and excited to share her experiences.)* Thank you so much, Today's Woman, for agreeing to join us this afternoon.

Today's Woman: And thank you very much for asking me. I am excited to be here. And please call me "TW." All my friends do.

I: All right, TW. Let's start back at the beginning of your life, and the beginning of your faith walk. Think back to your early childhood years. What would you say brought you joy and from where do you remember drawing your strength at that time?

TW: *(Looks as if thinking back and fondly recalling memories)* Oh, yes, when I think back to those early childhood days, it warms my heart remembering the time spent with my grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. This brought me great joy. Of course, so did ice cream, riding my bicycle, playing in puddles after a rain, my birthday, and Christmas! As far as my strength, I would have to say it came pretty much from my parents and family, even though I did attend Sunday school regularly.

I: *(Smiles and nods)* Yes, those of us who have been blessed with a happy childhood can well relate to all those memories. Let's move on to your teenage years, say, in high school. Tell us about that time in your life.

TW: As a teenager, and like most teenagers, I felt after Confirmation there wasn't much need for Sunday school or Bible class. I knew everything! Youth group was okay, but sometimes I felt stupid going to church functions, especially when all of my friends were going out and having fun! Besides, it wasn't thought of as "cool" to be

at church. I was greatly influenced by my friends. I had very little need for God at that time in my life.

Reader 1: *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.* 1 Corinthians 13:11a

I: Many of us can relate to that period in our lives as well. After high school did you go on to college or a career of some kind? (*TW nods*) What motivated you then?

TW: I felt very independent during this time in my life. However, I began to realize that I needed more strength than I could muster on my own. My prayer life improved, but I still only prayed when I needed something or when certain areas in my life were troubling me. If everything was moving along smoothly, I felt good and in control of my life. Joy seemed to come from my accomplishments. I began succeeding in my career and felt all was well in my world. I felt as though I could handle most anything!

Reader 2: *All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord.* Proverbs 16:2

I: I am beginning to see that you have had a good life thus far. Not much in the way of trials or tribulations. When did you realize there needed to be more in your life?

TW: After I married and had children. I loved my family and took great pride in my career. However, in the back of my mind and in my heart came a stirring of unhappiness. I had been reading how many women became unhappy with their lives and I was hearing it from many women at work as well. Many were trying to find happiness in various ways. Some were surrounding themselves with lots of new things. Some tried new jobs, and sadly, sometimes new husbands. I began asking myself questions like: What does God have planned for me? Why am I here? Is this the reason I was put on this earth, to be a wife, mother and have a career? Where did God and service to Him fit in? I began my search in the Scriptures and prayed for guidance in seeking an answer to my lack of fulfillment and happiness.

I: What did you find?

Reader 3: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* Psalm 119:105
The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. Psalm 28:7

TW: After sharing my unhappiness with the Lord as I spent time with Him in His Word and in prayer, I began to experience an inner peace that I'd not had before in my life. I came to realize that God was in control of my entire life. This realization brought a whole new perspective to my thoughts and my way of life. I had asked God to show me the way to true happiness, and He was surely answering my prayers!

I: Did you experience dramatic changes in your life then?

TW: *(Laughing a bit)* Well, certainly not overnight. God's Spirit was at work within me, and still is. I was finally beginning to realize that GOD is the source of my joy AND strength. For example, He showed me ways I could serve Him that in the past I was sure I could not do. Whenever I doubted that I could serve where He had placed me, the Scripture verse from Philippians 4:13 was my reassurance: *I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.* I have really grown in my faith in Jesus Christ. I want to be close to Him through His Word and Sacraments.

Does that mean there are never any more doubts about myself? No, but as my deeper commitment to God gives me joy, I'm also beginning to feel more fulfilled and I have a new kind of spiritual strength. Now I'm able to go beyond my own narrow focus of life, and for the first time, happy and eager to help people in my church and community. I know this is because of the strength the Lord gives me.

Reader 3: *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever.* 1 Peter 4:10-11

I: Our time is coming to an end, but I could spend another entire interview hearing about some of those new ways you have found to serve the Lord. Would you be willing to come back in the future and visit with us again?

TW: I'd be delighted to do that, and thank you again for inviting me today. Let me say in closing, please remember, the LORD is our source of joy and strength and it is He that enables us to serve Him!

I: Thank you, TW, for the fresh spiritual insight you've brought to our show. *(To audience)* That's our show for today. Thank you for joining us for another "Christian Experience."

All Sing: "Seek Ye First" *The Other Song Book 187, or*
"O God of Mercy, God of Light" *LW 397*

All Scripture is from NIV.

WHAT GIVES A WOMAN STRENGTH AND JOY? - *Written by Sandy Sutter*
Published by Lutheran Women's Missionary League
Revised 2005