

## CouplesInBloom.com – Rejoice Or Develop Problems

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Deuteronomy 28 is renowned for its great list of rewards for obedience ⇨ verses 1-14. The remaining 54 verses consist of a miserable collection of problems which result from disobedience. In the middle of that mess, verses 45-47 say ⇨ “**All these curses will come upon you... because you did not serve the Lord joyfully and gladly for the abundance of all things.**” Note that the “**curses**” listed all have **mental characteristics**:

**Confused, terrorized, insane, oppressed, violated, victimized, demoralized, distressed, miserable, diseased, destroyed, torn, doubting, dreading, unsure, fearful, worrying, discontent...** all from one sin, all from one attitude: not serving God joyfully.

The word “joyfully” here means to “**brighten up**”, that is, from a not-so-cheerful place. The word “gladly” here means to “**make good** in your heart”. These might imply that **pessimists are cursed**. Proverbs 15:15 ⇨ says, “All the days of the afflicted are evil, but **gladness of heart is a continual feast.**” *Every* day has evil available; however: **we** choose which attitude we will embrace. God allows us to reap from our choice to teach us whether we made the right choice. Thus, we learn firsthand how to live the right way.

The King James Version and other Bible translations use the word “rejoice” for these literal verbs: **leap, wave, brighten up, shout, spin under violent emotion, jump for joy, laugh, delight, exult, cheer, put in a good frame of mind, vaunt, glory**. All these great expressions are tragically hidden by a simple “rejoice”. We need to “rightly divide (*literally “make a straight cut; dissect correctly”*) the word of truth”, ⇨ 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Rejoice in the Lord always and **again** I say rejoice” ⇨ Philippians 4:4. Maybe it says “again” because we need to do it more. You may say, “**I am a born pessimist**” and I reply, “**So am I, but God is showing me a better way.**” Leverage pessimism to remind us that life could be worse, and leverage Scripture to instruct us on how life can be better.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” ⇨ Proverbs 23:7. **If we complain about what we do not have, we are that. If we serve joyfully and gladly for the abundance of all things, we are that.** Not difficult to understand. But how do we make the change? There is a lesson about learning from the way Scripture talks about Noah’s three sons:

**Biblical order:** spiritual way of learning:

1. Shem - Jews: the **heart**
2. Ham - Canaanites: the **hands**
3. Japheth - Greeks: the **intellect**

**Birth order:** human way of learning:

1. Japheth - Greeks: the **intellect**
2. Shem - Jews: the **heart**
3. Ham - Canaanites: the **hands**

**Receiving power starts with revelation (heart #1), not with will power (mind #1).** God shows us here that the **mind** is never to rule over the **heart**, where His Spirit lives. Humanism says we do not need God. Optimism alone is a ticket to hell. **God shares His glory with no one** ⇨ Isaiah 42:8; Jude 1:25, but thankfully offers us salvation by grace!

Apply this to our marriage: **serve our spouse joyfully and gladly for the abundance we do have.** God made marriage, and problems do develop when we refuse to obey His Word. The **heart** revelation of His love draws the obedience of our **hands**, renews our **mind**, and ministers **blessings, not curses** to us, our spouse and beyond. ♥ Loren Falzone