

Joy Overflowing—Science Object Lesson

Materials and preparation for this object lesson: A 12 oz. clear drinking glass; a round cake pan; five paper cups; ½ cup of vinegar; one teaspoon of baking soda; one cup of water. Pour about 1/8 cup of water in three of the paper cups and write “PRAY” on the side of one cup, “BELIEVE” on another paper cup and “BIBLE” on the third paper cup. Set aside the rest of the water to be used during the object lesson. Pour the vinegar in the fourth paper cup and write “Problems and Troubles” on the side of this paper cup. Pour the baking soda into the last paper cup and write “HOLY SPIRIT” on the side of this cup.

Philippians 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” God’s Word tells us that we should always be joyful. This doesn’t mean that we will always be happy, but we can still have joy, even when things aren’t going well. When you trust in Jesus as your Savior His Spirit comes to live in you. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in your life as you listen to Him and allow Him to control your thoughts, attitudes and actions. Joy is one of the fruit the Holy Spirit produces in your life. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV).

When problems come into your life, Satan wants you to complain or worry and even doubt God; he wants to rob you of your joy. But you have the Holy Spirit’s power to win over Satan and be joyful even during hard times. I’ve got water, vinegar and baking soda here and by mixing these three ingredients something special happens that can help you remember to always have joy!

Here is a clear drinking glass that represents your life. (*Hold up the glass then sit it in the cake pan to catch the mixture when it overflows.*) When you receive Jesus as your Savior, He comes to live in you by His Spirit. I’m going to pour water into this glass to represent the fact that God’s forgiveness has washed away your sin and its punishment and you now have new life! (*Pour the water into the clear drinking glass filling it about half full.*)

This cup that has “Problems and Troubles” written on it is filled with vinegar. Vinegar is an acetic acid. It’s a weak acid that can be eaten and does not harm your body. However it does add a sour taste to your food. Just because you have received Jesus doesn’t mean that you will no longer have problems. This vinegar reminds me of problems and troubles. Even though vinegar has a sour taste, it can add a good flavor to food. God uses problems and troubles in our life to teach us to rely on Him so He gets our praise. When problems come you *may* feel like complaining, worrying, or doubting God. (*Pour the vinegar into the clear drinking glass.*) But don’t allow these bad attitudes and feelings to rob you of your joy! Instead, allow the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of joy in your life.

Here’s a cup of water that has “Pray” written on it. When problems come, one of the first things you can do is *pray*. Tell God how you feel and thank Him that He is with you as you go through this hard time. God tells us in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.” (*Pour the water from the “Pray” cup into the clear drinking glass.*)

Next, trust or believe that God will help you go through this tough time. Here’s another cup of water that has “Believe” written on it. Jesus said, “And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Matthew 21:22). Faith and trust mean to believe—to have confidence that God will do what He says. (*Pour the water from the “Believe” cup into the clear drinking glass.*)

You have just talked to God. Now it’s time you allow Him to talk to you. This cup has “Bible” written on it. Spend time reading God’s Word and allowing Him to speak to you. The Book of Psalms has lots to say about praising God during troubles. Listen to Psalm 56:2-4, “my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?” (*Pour the water from the “Bible” cup into the clear drinking glass.*)

When you pray, believe and read the Bible, God's Spirit living in you will begin to change your thoughts and attitudes about the trouble or problem you are facing. I have some baking soda in the cup that has Holy Spirit written on it. Watch what happens when I pour the baking soda into the water and vinegar mixture. (*Pour the baking soda into the clear drinking glass. The liquid in the glass will bubble over.*) When God's Spirit is controlling your thoughts and attitudes then the fruit of joy will overflow in your life.

When the vinegar mixes with the baking soda the acetic acid in the vinegar neutralizes [reduces the effect of] the baking soda and a gas called carbon dioxide forms. Carbon dioxide is actually the bubbles that overflow when vinegar reacts with the baking soda. The baking soda reminds me of joy that comes from the Holy Spirit as you obey God and trust in His promises. The fruit of joy that comes from God's Spirit is a deep inner gladness you have because you know that God is in control. It's the inner gladness you have when you realize that God is faithful and always keeps His promises. Through His Spirit, God will give you His joy and strength to handle problems. In the Bible we read, "Do not grieve [be sad], for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10 KJV). The next time you face a problem will you remember what happens when you add baking soda to vinegar? Will you allow the fruit of joy to overflow from your life?



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