Volume 10, **Issue 04**: **Cheerful No Matter What**!

One of the things I am pressing in for this year is joy. While at a Christmas party last year, someone challenged me about what I do for pleasure. They felt that I was missing out because I don't indulge in the things they enjoy. From the experience of that moment, I wanted to find ways to make my joy obvious to those around me. So I went in pursuit of studies on joy and found a few that caught my attention.

Neal Samudre's work on the subject focuses on making joy a daily habit. He writes that joy is the internal satisfaction we feel when we pursue well-being and success, even through great difficulty. It makes us feel better and more positive, but it differs from happiness in that it can be present during difficult times. Now this speaks to me. I recall some really difficult times at work last year when I was cheerful on the inside. What's powerful to note is that the presence of hardship doesn't constitute the absence of joy.

Joy is something we can have day in, day out irrespective of our circumstances. Neal correctly stated that it's impossible to be happy when going through trials. Your external circumstances won't allow for it. But it's very possible to have joy when going through trials. Joy to me then is something very valuable to have, because my reality isn't always happy. I know how to be peaceful and calm, but I want to learn how to exude with joy no matter what.

Just like any other fruit of the Spirit, Neal wrote that joy is not something we automatically have, it has to be cultivated. Joy is not automatic. It is a discipline, a daily choice that we must make. This means that to get the hang of it, we must make a decision to be joyful irrespective of what comes up. One of my declarations in the morning goes like this, "This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it. I will enjoy my family, I will enjoy my work, I will enjoy my food, I will enjoy going out to exercise, I will enjoy my encounters, my cheerful heart will fill my day with song".

It is joy that gives us strength to push through difficult circumstances that come up in our day, or those that stay with us for days or weeks or months. The Bible says that "The joy of the Lord is my strength." Therefore, if we make joy a habit, we will have the stamina to face anything and be joyful through it.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi