

She's called "Sunshine" because something's happened to her to renew her joy after years of sorrow, ennui, even horror. When it happens, we call it "grace" (Greek, *chara*, on the same root as *charis* "joy" and *charismat*- "charismatic")....This thinksheet PRESUPPOSES that the biblical person (1) can and (2) should (3) be joy face-to-face with God and (4) serve to call forth, to renew, refurbish, re-brighten joy in others. A further PRESUPPOSITION: Outer circumstances are irrelavant to (1) this condition and (2) this project in life and in spirituality. Because for this joy, our Lord "endured the Cross, despising its shame, and is set down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 12.2): Jesus' behavior was repulsive enough to get himself killed; i.e., he shaped his life-responses to vigors/values/virtues other than the going conventional expectations, and took the consequences. (Being on-Center, he was off-center--in Greek, "eccentric," so much so as to threaten intolerably the authority-centers of religion and politics.) "The joy of the LORD is your strength."

GROUP EXERCISE: Regrets for lost opportunities cast a dull film over one's present joy--which, more than anything else, explains why so few ever reprimize joy: so few become again the "sunshine" so many of us were as children. Grace may use this exercise to renew the luster of joy and so to improve one's power to be good news....Meditate on the following Shakespeare quote (*Julius Caesar* IV.iii.217):

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.*

On the rest of this page and on page two (over), LIST from your own life-history such omissions as you believe have led to "shallows" and "miseries." This is enormously difficult, for it requires you to bypass all the alibis you've used to conceal all these failures from yourself and from others....When the group has determined that enough time has been given for the listing, do the following either as two-stage (subgrouping into dyads or triads) then sharing in plenum) or as one-stage (plenum): Each one tell the story of one such omission, preferably (but not probably!) the most painful one....The best way, usually, to conclude such an experience is with a service of confession/thanksgiving/dedication.