

# Find the Joy in Life

Thomas Aquinas, a 13<sup>th</sup> century priest, once said: “No one can live without joy.”

But many people do live joyless lives, and the reason is often simply because they don't know how to be happy. They are so intent on the three P's – power, prestige and prosperity – that they miss out on joy.

Writing on that subject, Steve Goodier, an ordained United Methodist minister, author of numerous books about personal development, motivation and inspiration, referenced a work by French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who pioneered modern photography as an art form during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a master of candid photography and something of a genius at spotting and photographing apparent contradictions – pictures that left mysteries unexplained.

One of his famous photographs was shot in a poor section of Seville, Spain, in 1933. The picture depicts a rundown alley surrounded by decaying walls, strewn with rubble and riddled with bullet holes dotting gray walls. The setting alone evokes feelings of sadness and despair.

“But then, the contradiction,” Goodier said. “Within the grim alley, children are playing. They wear dirty and tattered clothes, as one might expect in such a setting, but like playing children everywhere, they laugh with carefree joy. In the foreground, a tiny boy on crutches hobbles away from two other boys, his face lit up with a broad grin. One boy is laughing so hard he has to hold his side. Others lean on the cracked walls, beaming with delight.”



It's easy to spot the contrast – and the point, Goodier added. There was joy amid the rubble of life, laughter among life's ruins.

“We cannot avoid pain, however we try,” he said. “But we can avoid joy. We cannot escape hardship and trouble, but we can miss out on much of life's peace and laughter.”

(more)

If you feel as if you could use more joy, Goodier offered these few tips:

- Do something today just for the fun of it.
- Decide to fill your thoughts with less anxiety and more peace.
- Laugh a little more. A little more heartily and a little more often.
- Practice a hopeful attitude.
- Love as much as you can. Love people. Love experiences. Love ideas. Love beauty. Love life.

We all will find ourselves occasionally amid the rubble of life. But even there you can discover joy.

*A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter