

Look for joy every day

BY TODD GADDIS

Wendy's launched an advertising campaign in 1984 featuring 81 year-old Clara Peller. Upon being served a small hamburger patty on a large bun, this elderly manicurist/beautician asks, "Where's the beef?" These commercials became a cultural sensation, with Wendy's annual revenue increasing by 31 percent.

Forty years later, one wonders, "Where's the joy?" Has there ever been a time when we've had more, yet are enjoying it less? Such a question should be considered by the Christian community specifically. Christ gave His life in order that our sins would be forgiven. As a result, the Holy Spirit lives in us. Yet, all too often, we're missing out on the abundant life that could be ours.

I have in my sermon illustration file a survey that includes several factors that attract unsaved people to our churches. Number one on the list is "joy demonstrated in the lives of Christians in every area." People are hungry for something that only a relationship with Jesus and a connection with a community of believers can provide.

The Old Testament book of Nehemiah tells of the wall around Jerusalem being rebuilt in 52 days. Upon completion of the

project, a dedication service was held featuring, among other things, a reading of the law. When the people present heard the words spoken by Ezra the priest, they wept. At that point, Nehemiah said, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep. Go, send portions to him who

has nothing prepared. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:9,10 NASB). Despite their humble state of conviction, this was to be a time of celebration.

David writes, "You have filled my heart with greater joy than when grain and new wine abound. But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. You fill me with joy in your presence" (Psalm 4:7, 5:11, 16:9, 11, NIV).

Listed prominently among the fruit of the Spirit is joy. Paul also writes, "rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice" (Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:4 NASB). Note the word "always." This includes the troubling seasons of our lives, as well as the favorable.

It is, in fact, during times of difficulty that we should dig deep and do our best to muster up an attitude of jubilation and delight.

As Scripture says,

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4 NASB).

As one dear saint wisely declared, "I could have done without many pleasures, but could not have spared one sorrow that God allowed to come into my life!"

Author Leo Buscaglia recalls this memorable account of a "misery dinner." It was the night after his father came home and told the family he faced bankruptcy because his partner had stolen their firm's funds. Promptly, his mother went out and sold some of her jewelry to provide food for a delicious feast. Despite criticism from some, she declared, "The time for joy is now, when we need it most, not next week." Her courageous act bolstered the family.

You may be thinking, "that's a sweet story pastor, but I'm just not feeling it." It's not a matter of feelings, but rather faith. Feelings ebb and flow, often depending on mood and circumstances. Faith recognizes that whereas, "Weeping may last for the night, joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5 NASB).

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TODD GADDIS



CENTRAL CITY Convention Center's outdoor pool is fun for all ages. Pictured jumping into the water last weekend is Eric Atcher of Bremen.--George Austin photo

MCC expands science training programs

Madisonville Community College (MCC) announced the expansion of its applied technology training programs this fall at the new West Kentucky Regional Training Center in Muhlenberg County.

The facility, formerly the Muhlenberg South Middle School, will offer training in electrical and power systems to meet the growing workforce demands in the region.

The training center will provide flexible scheduling options with classes available on either Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday. Students can enroll in specialized coursework covering essential industry skills, including basic electrical knowledge, power development, electrical power distribution, basic electrical controls, equipment maintenance, and programmable logic controllers.

"This expansion represents MCC's commitment to providing accessible, hands-on training that directly addresses the

skilled workforce needs of our region," said President Cindy Kelley. "The West Kentucky Regional Training Center will serve as a hub for developing the next generation of skilled technicians and maintenance professionals."

MCC will also offer electrical construction classes at its Central City site on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, providing students with multiple pathways to gain valuable technical skills.

The programs are designed to support the growing demand for skilled technicians in manufacturing, utilities, and construction sectors throughout Western Kentucky.

Registration for fall classes is now open, and classes begin on Aug.18. For more information about admissions and enrollment, contact the Madisonville Community College Muhlenberg Campus at 270-757-9881.

MEDICAL DIRECTORY



Twice-Yearly Shot Proves Successful At Preventing HIV Among Women

(CNN) - Two shots a year of a drug currently used to treat HIV infections were dramatically effective at preventing infections in a study among young women and

adolescent girls in Africa.

The twice-yearly injection of the drug lenacapavir can provide total protection against HIV infections, demonstrating 100% efficacy in Phase 3 trial data released by drugmaker Gilead and published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

For years, most people have taken prevention tools known as PrEP, such as a daily pill called Truvada to prevent infections of the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV.

More recently, some people have received regular injections of the drug Apretude – two shots administered one month apart then every two months thereafter – to reduce their risk of HIV.

The twice-a-year injections of lenacapavir could add another option at preventing HIV infections to the toolbox.

Among more than 5,000 women and adolescent girls participating in the trial in Africa who were HIV negative, none of the participants who received twice-yearly lenacapavir acquired HIV infection during the course of the study, according to the results which were also presented at the International AIDS Conference in Munich.

The study, called the PURPOSE 1 trial, involved adolescent girls and young women in South Africa and Uganda who were randomly assigned to either receive lenacapavir injections every 26 weeks or daily HIV medications – either emtricitabine–tenofovir alafenamide or emtricit-

abine–tenofovir disoproxil fumarate – in pill form. It was a double-blind study, and the participants did not know which group they were in.

Many of the women and girls who received lenacapavir, about 69%, experienced reactions at the injection site compared with 35% in the placebo injection group, but no safety concerns were found, according to the researchers.

Among the women and girls, the researchers assessed how many HIV infections occurred over 26 weeks, and 55 infections total were observed: zero in the lenacapavir group, 39 in the daily emtricitabine–tenofovir alafenamide group and 16 in the daily emtricitabine–tenofovir disoproxil fumarate group.

The finding of lenacapavir having 100% efficacy for HIV prevention in women "is an important advance for the field, and I think that the field will welcome it as an additional prevention option," said Dr. Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

A nurse prepares a trial dose of PrepVacc to inject into a participant on March 17, 2022 in Masaka, Uganda. The African-led project, which is run by The Uganda Virus Research Institute with the support of several European countries, is one of only two HIV vaccine efficacy trials currently taking place. The trials, the first of their kind in Africa, will involve 1668 people across Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa. The trial is combining experimental HIV vaccines and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) simultaneously, something that has never been done before. It is scheduled to conclude by the end of 2024.



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