

## Reclaim The Joy Jesus Intends For Us

by Candyce Carden

“Wanna come fishing with us, Grami?” asked my grandson, Deacon, as I sat on the veranda enjoying my book, coffee, and the cool morning quiet of the surrounding mountains. He was up early.

I’m not a fan of fishing, but I am a fan of my grandkids. Laying aside my book, I followed Deacon and his sister Eden to the dock where their dad stood baiting the fishing lines. I sat in a lawn chair next to my daughter to watch the activity. Her family was vacationing in the North Georgia Mountains near my home and had asked me to join them.

It wasn’t long before the sounds of excitement signaled someone had a bite. Surprised, I saw it was Eden, who is usually more reserved than her brother. She didn’t rival Deacon’s noisiness, but the amazement and joy on her face was something to behold.

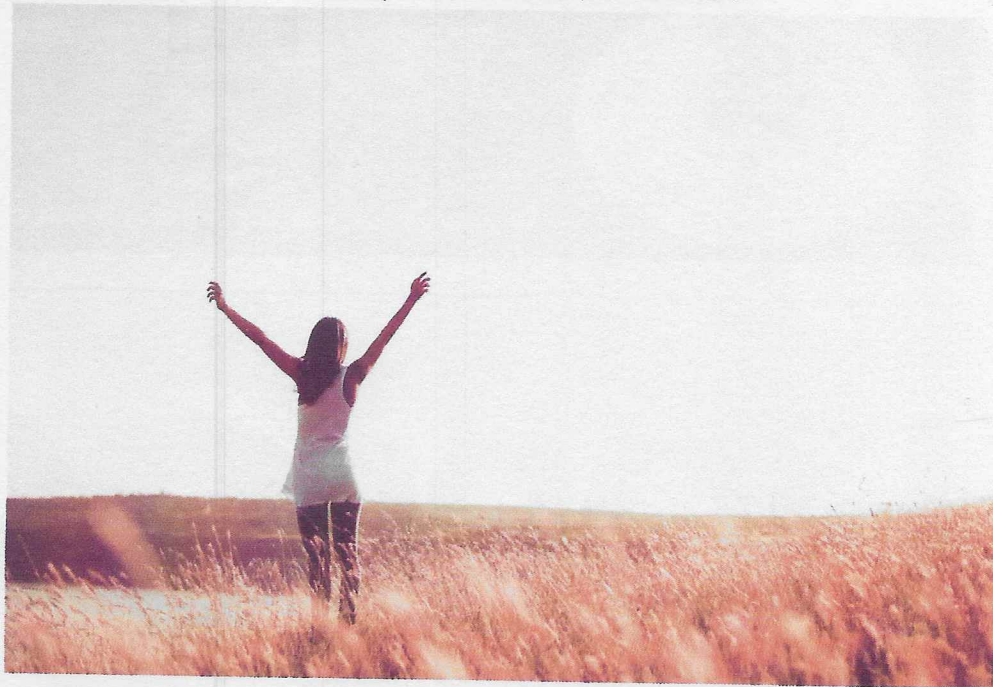
Her first catch! A live wiggly fish dangled on the end of her line. As I looked into Eden’s face, I caught the excitement and clapped in delight. I was taken back to my childhood summers when each day unveiled new and wondrous discoveries to be made.

And I had to wonder: when do we stop looking at each day with anything less than joyful anticipation? Why do we resist getting animated about life? Maybe the peer-pressured years of our teens change us. Maybe we hide our emotions because the world tells us we’re unsophisticated for believing there’s anything new under the sun. Maybe we let the disappointments and troubles we encounter rob us of hope.

When we let boredom or cynicism become our default mode, we aren’t experiencing life abundantly as Jesus intends. Consider what Jesus says in [Matthew 19:14](#): “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Jesus wants all His children, young and old, to enjoy life. And when we show our joy, we serve as witnesses for Him and the abundant life He came to give (John 10:10). Joy is a response to God’s gifts and to who we are in Him. It’s not difficult to find and express joy.

- We start by remembering each new day is from God.
- We express gratitude for this gift.
- We open our eyes and see signs of God’s love all around us.
- And, just like children, we celebrate.



“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

Thank you, Lord, for this day you have made. Make my eyes and heart like those of little children. Help me see the many reasons I have to rejoice and be glad. And remind me not to hide my joy because, by sharing it with others, I am showing them You. Amen.

What do you have to celebrate today?

