**Faith and Simple Instructions**

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*Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words. Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11*

I find myself really enjoying Paul’s simple instructions in this verse. It doesn’t take great revelation to understand them. But, it does take a process to work them out, and that is not a bad thing.

Be joyful. Or as other translations state: rejoice. No matter what we face, there is always something we can rejoice in. Some days, it may be obvious. A raise, a breakthrough in relationships, a good diagnosis are all things that bring joy to our souls. Choosing to rejoice or be joyful when things are not going so well is a step toward maturity. Being able to be grateful we have a Savior to help us through those difficult life issues can lessen anxiety and fear. It takes a step of faith to choose to rejoice, but try it. It is often the beginning of breakthroughs. If you struggle with this, try singing out loud a simple worship song. Or simply begin by thanking the Lord for your salvation. It will take your mind off your difficulty and remind you, you are not alone. Try laughing.

Grow in maturity. The Amplified Translation states it this way: *Be made complete [be what you should be].*While the NIV says: *Strive for full restoration.* We must allow God and the Holy Spirit to have its perfect work in every area of our lives. This means giving Him freedom to convict and convince us of any sin, wrong attitudes or falling short of His plan for us. This is always done for our benefit and blessing.

Encourage each other. It is so easy to get focused on ourselves. It takes maturity to see where we can be a blessing to others and discover how to encourage them. When we help others, we find ourselves helped.

Live in harmony and peace. We don’t always have to be right, or have the last word. The word ‘harmony’ implies we will be playing distinct notes–but as we follow the Lord, it should sound good to His ears. Let’s let our Heavenly Father be about His business parenting His children. *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:18 NIV*is always a great verse to live by.

Then comes the great promise. *Then the God of love and peace will be with you.* I know He is always with us, but cultivating His Presence is amazing. We can draw on Him for His love and His peace. No matter the situation, the Prince of Peace has His peace to bestow upon each of us, and I so appreciate that.

So my friends, I encourage us all to live simply and follow Him. Do not make things so complicated in your walk with Him. These were Paul’s last words to the Corinthian church, and they are good words for us as well.

*Father, I ask you to help us walk your simple life. Help us to be joyful today, letting the rivers of life flow from our hearts unto others. We choose to rejoice in your goodness. Father, I thank you that your are helping us grow up into the men and women you want us to be. We choose to live in harmony and peace, as much that lies within us. Show us where we can be an encouragement to others. Use us. In Jesus’ Name, amen.*