

ALTAPASS ALLEGORIES
BY
A CHURCH MEMBER

Recently, I heard someone say, "When I go to church, I want to enjoy myself." At first, this seemed to be a reasonable statement; then I began to ponder what he said. I had always assumed that "joy" and "enjoy" meant pretty much the same thing. However, the more I thought about it, the more I began to see a great difference between the two.

Joy means: a very glad feeling; to rejoice. It is mentioned in God's word 149 times. How do we attain joy when we go to God's house? Paul knew this kind of joy. Even in the worst of circumstances, he would begin his letters to the churches by speaking of joy. True joy comes from worship and praise and obedience to our Saviour. So when we come through the church door with our heart and mind set to worship, praise, and obey, we will be able to say as we leave that it has truly been good to be in the house of the Lord. Our hearts will be filled with joy.

On the other hand, the word "enjoy" is mentioned only 11 times in the Bible. I'm convinced that sometimes we might go to church with the idea that we should be entertained. If all we're seeking is entertainment or enjoyment, we have the wrong conception of worship. The word "enjoy" implies that we get pleasure from something we are not required to do much more than show-up for. Nowhere in God's word do I find that worship and entertainment are even remotely related. To provide entertainment for the flesh is Satan's job; he does a good job of it in the world.

Have you heard a child whine, "I'm bored!?" Usually, there is a room full of toys to play with when you hear this. He/She is expecting you to stop what you are doing and entertain him/her. This sounds like some Christians. They go to church expecting to be entertained. You can be assured they will leave the service with an unhappy heart. So when we arrive at the church, let's already be prepared to worship, pray, and obey. We will find that we have true joy ourselves and have enough joy left over to share with others. The difference is that "joy" comes from within the heart while "enjoy" means depending on the world to make us joyful (and that "ain't" gonna happen).