

Psalm 119:1 (NLT2)

Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD.

Almost everything that we buy comes with instructions. If you think about it, even a bottle of shampoo has instructions. But even though most everything has written instructions, and even if we read them, if we do not do exactly what it says, we will not enjoy what we have bought, or we will even call it useless. How many times have we said, *“I bought this brand-new gadget to help my life be easier by it doing such and such, and it doesn’t do what they said it would do.”* Well, did you read the instructions, and even if you did, did you follow those instructions?

You can buy a bottle of shampoo that has easy to follow instructions because you want to wash your hair, and the instructions are so easy that a little child can understand them. **“Wash, Rinse, Repeat.”** But if you just **“wash”** and don’t **“rinse”**, you will walk around with soapy hair all day and think, *“This shampoo is awful, it just left my hair all soapy.”* No, you didn’t do the **“Rinse”** part of the instructions, you just did the **“Wash”** part. Or maybe you drank the bottle of shampoo and ended up in the hospital, and now you want to sue the shampoo company. Well, it wasn’t their fault, it’s your fault for not doing what the instructions say.

Thinking of that, how many hate their lives, even some Christians? One of the reasons they do is that even though they have written instructions, the bible, God’s instructions **“BIBLE - Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth”** and even if they read it, but don’t follow it, then no wonder they are not happy with life, because they failed to follow the written instructions. Or, like our shampoo example, we only do part of the instructions yet fail to follow all the way through.

But what if we **“feared the Lord”** more,

† **Psalm 111:10** *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.*

and decided to truly **“Depart from evil”** as the instructions tells us to

† **Psalm 34:14** *Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.*

These are just two examples, yet how many more instructions do we have in the bible, that we actually read every day, yet we do not follow them and then we cry out to God because our life is miserable... forgetting that it is because we read His instructions, yet do not follow them.

† **Proverbs 3:7-8** *Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

Also note that the bible is not a bunch of rules, those who think that way would also think, *“Those darn shampoo companies, all they want to do is control my life by telling me how to wash my hair. I will not be controlled by them, so I just won’t wash my hair anymore.”* I know

that sound ridiculous, yet how many treat God's word that way, or just picking and choosing which instructions they want to follow and which ones they don't.

You may think, "*I won't kill my neighbor, but I will steal his lawnmower.*" No, both are wrong, we can not pick and choose which instructions God has given us, we must choose to follow them all. Not just read them but read them and follow them as well.

"*Well, I think God is just trying to be a kill joy*" some will think. That would be like reading the drivers manual to get a driver's license and thinking, "*All they want to do is spoil my fun. So what if the speed limit is 35 MPH, I want to go 60 MPH, because that's more fun.*" No, it's not about spoiling your fun, it's about safety, yours as well as the safety of others.

So, if your joy seems to have diminished, get into God's word and asking Him to show you how you have not been following His instruction and how by not doing so, you have no joy.

- † **Psalm 51:12** *Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*
- † **Isaiah 61:7** *Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.*
- † **Nehemiah 12:43** *Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.*
- † **Nehemiah 8:10** *Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*