

We live in an age of addiction to things that give us a 'high' of feeling. Television and radio advertising takes full advantage of this and offers us so many things that will make us feel better or make our lives much more thrilling. A certain pain reliever promises to make the pain go away fast, a candy bar will 'pick us up' when we are 'low'. And one soft drink will 'make us feel so good, so fast.' Not only do we need to feel better, but we must have it right now! When the comedian John Belushi died recently, it was reported that he was in the habit of 'speedballing', which was one of the fastest ways known to get 'high' with drugs. This desperate need to feel good artificially is part of the problem in our society. I believe that this need really stems from the fact that people just do not feel good about themselves. We cannot generate within ourselves a constant level of joy, but we look for thrills, for 'fun', so that, at least temporarily, make us feel better.

I think this relates to an interesting experiment I read of where electrodes were implanted in certain 'pleasure' centers in the brains of rats. These electrodes were activated by a lever which the rat could operate. Let me quote some of the results: "Rats will press the lever at rates as high as 5000 times per hour... They will press for 15 or 20 hours until they drop exhausted, will sleep, and will then return to press again." This makes me think of a great character test for humans. What if we were connected up this way, and were able to 'thrill' ourselves continually? Do you feel good enough about yourself to stop pressing the lever and go on with your life? Is there enough joy in your life that you don't need it? {We have this today with our electronic gizmos}

There should be, because joy is an important ingredient in the Christian life. The apostle John makes this very clear as he repeatedly writes about the 'fullness' of our joy. Our joy should be full enough to live without being addicted to external thrills. If your life is lacking in this way...