

The Joy of the Lord

Let us start by defining Joy. According to Strong's s Concordance Joy is "*cheerfulness, that is, calm delight.*" It means to be glad or to rejoice. It is also defined as *a glorious and triumphant state.*

Each believer can walk in joy. Joy is already a reality in the inside of every born-again believer (Galatians 5:22-23).

It is crucial to understand that joy is not synonymous with happiness. Joy is not based on the things around us but rather what is on the inside of us and the goodness and fitfulness of God

We can have peace amid the turmoil. All the earth may be falling apart all around us, and yet be in tremendous peace and operate in joy. In the same way, we can be joyful in hardships, misery, and turmoil.

A. Joy is a choice

Habakkuk 3:17-19 *"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."*

- a) Regardless of what you are going through, you can choose to rejoice. You can walk in joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8). We don't have to wait to get to heaven to experience joy. We can start here on earth.

- b) We should and can rejoice regardless of the challenges. No matter what we have gone through, we can rejoice.
- c) We can choose to rejoice even when all things are falling apart all around us.
 - i) Habakkuk made a decision to rejoice, so can we.
- d) This passage of scripture is painting the worst possible situation. It is paining loss, emptiness, lack, and so forth. But look at the attitude of Habakkuk in the midst of it all.
 - i) Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
 - ii) neither shall fruit be in the vines;
 - iii) the labor of the olive shall fail,
 - iv) and the fields shall yield no meat;
 - v) the flock shall be cut off from the fold,
 - vi) and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

- e) Some of us are willing to praise God, but few of us are willing to praise God on **both sides** of the Red sea. If we are willing to praise God in the hallway, doors will open.
 - i) **We can rejoice under any circumstances if we choose to. It is our choice to choose to rejoice or not.**

B. Trust will manifest through rejoicing

- a) Psalm 5:11 "But let all those that put their **trust in thee rejoice**: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee."
- b) If we are fully trusting and depending on God, we ought to rejoice and shout for Joy. Trust in the Lord will cause rejoicing and shouting for joy.

C. Memory

- a) Psalm 103:2-5 "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who

forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

- b) One of the primary ways to trigger joy is through memory.
 - i) As we remember the goodness and faithfulness of God in our lives, we can't help but rejoice.
 - ii) Those who aren't operating in joy have forgotten what God has done for them. They have not called to memory His goodness and faithfulness.
 - iii) The more we recall, the more we will be thankful and rejoice thereby.
- c) We can't truly rejoice without remembrance or engaging our memory—thoughts of the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord.
- d) Remember the pit you crawled out of?
 - i) **Isaiah 51:1** *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*
 - As we look unto Jesus, "The Rock," and remember His faithfulness towards us and pit where he dug us out of, we should have no reason but rather to this should cause you to rejoice.

D. Rejoice in the Lord always:

- a) Philippians 4:4 *"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."*
- b) This is an instruction to rejoice not a plea or request.

E. Fullness of Joy

Psalm 16:11 *"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

- a) One of the places we will always experience the fullness joy of God in our physical and emotional lives is in the presence of God.
- b) Once we depart from the presence of God, we have departed from joy and the fullness of Joy. We can't just visit the presence of God, but rather dwell there.
- c) Although we have joy in our born-again spirits, we can release that joy by spending time in the presence of God.
- d) True pleasure is not found in the world or the things of this world, but rather in relationship with Jesus and the presence of God. This pleasure is a pleasure beyond what this world can offer.
 - i) Lack of joy is a sign that we have not been spending time in the presence of God.

F. Default to Joy

- a) We ought to learn to default to joy.
- b) Default: it is a home page. Something you fall back on. Your second nature place. It is a preselected place that we naturally default to.
- c) We have to make a pre-decision that we will default to joy, instead of complaining or murmuring.

G. In Everything Give Thanks

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

- a) Giving thanks releases Joy in our souls. If we aren't thankful, we will not experience joy. Joy is a byproduct of being thankful, not the other way around.
- b) The will of God is **NOT EVERYTHING** but giving thanks.
- c) This is also not saying to give thanks **FOR** everything, but **IN** everything. This is a huge difference.

H. The Righteous Rejoice

Proverbs 13:9 "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out."(KJV)

- a) The NIV translated this verse as "*The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.*"
- b) Notice: **The righteous rejoice.** It is the true believers in the Lord Jesus that are righteous, and they rejoice.
- c) **Joy is the light of the righteous. This light is visible and speaks of the truth that we are believers as we rejoice.**
- d) One of the ways the world **identifies** Christians is by Joy.

I. Ordained strength and perfected praise

Psalms 8:2 "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou **ordained strength** because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

- a) Matthew 21:16 "And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast **perfected praise?**"
- b) Notice the commentary of the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Jesus through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit quoted and **interchangeably** used "*ordained strength*" with "*perfected praise.*"
- c) This would mean that:
 - i) Praise is strength.
 - As we praise the Lord, we release strength into our lives.
 - ii) The Joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).
 - iii) Like praise, joy is also strength. Joy will still (quiet) the enemy and the avenger.

- As we praise the Lord, we enter into joy and this stills the enemy.

J. The joy of the Lord is your strength

Nehemiah 8:10 "neither be ye sorry; for the **joy of the Lord is your strength.**"

Proverbs 24:10 "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy **strength** is small."

a) Praise is strength

- i) We saw earlier that praise is strength (Psalm 8:1 and Matthew 21:16).
- ii) **If we do not operate in praise, rejoicing, and thanksgiving we will be lacking in strength.**

b) Sinking, fainting, or slacking?

- i) If we sink or slacken, we have not been praising or walking in joy because the Joy of the Lord is our strength.

c) Bigger Strength

- i) We can make our **strength bigger** by praising, rejoicing, and giving thanks.
- ii) **Small strength = small joy** because the Joy of the Lord is our strength.

d) The joy of the Lord is our strength. **The joy of the Lord = Strength.**

- i) **If we lack strength, we need to start operating in joy.** It is time to flip the joy switch.
- ii) **Joy releases strength to us.**

e) Depressed and stressed or lack strength?

- i) People who are depressed and stressed, lack strength because they have not been rejoicing, thanking, and praising God.

- ii) They have rather been murmuring, complaining, and focused on the negatives.

K. Why are thou cast down?

a) Psalm 42:11 "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

i) This question implies that you should not be cast down.

b) Are you cast down, mourning or in turmoil, made uneasy or restless; disturbed?

i) Your answer lies in hoping in the Lord, rejoicing, and praising Him.

L. Reap in Joy.

a) Psalm 126:5 "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

b) We reap in joy.

i) If you are not reaping, check your *"joymeter"*

ii) We reap by praising God!

iii) Rejoicing is what causes us to reap.

iv) Praise your answer in!

M. When joy withers

a) Joel 1:12 "The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: **because joy is withered away from the sons of men.**"

i) Joy is what springs life into our lives and things around us.

ii) If we do not operate in joy, everything around us will **die and become gloomy.**

iii) According to Psalm 67:5-6 "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us."

- Praising the Lord causes the earth to bring forth, yield her increase.
- We can praise ourselves into increase. We got to be joyful and thankful.

N. Joy killers—Legalism, guilt, and Condemnation:

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

- i) We need to be cautious of these joy killers. When we walk in condemnation and legalism (trusting in our good works and efforts for right standing with God) we will end up being condemned.
- ii) Condemnation does not have God as it's source. Satan and the flesh are where condemnation comes from.
- iii) When we are walking in condemnation, we will not praise hence lacking strength.
- iv) Many times, those who are sad are either carrying a lot of care (1 Peter 5:7) or condemnation.