

Joy of The Lord

To further comment on the essays we just read, if you do not believe that God has no sense of humor, I can attest that He does! Not only does He have a tremendous sense of humor, He is extremely patient as well as He has been dealing with me for 66 years.

I realize it can be more than difficult to find humor in this day and age with the with the constant bombardment of evil in our nation. This comes as no surprise to anyone who seeks and reads the Bible. However, having a sense of humor can actually spring from the joy in our life. We may have covered this topic a couple of years back but it is worth a repeat.

Is there anyone you can think of who does not want to live joyfully? With the world and our own country in such a poor ethical condition, do you know anyone who consistently displays a genuine appearance of joy? Most people nowadays walk around with such a soured attitude, so focused on “the self.” They probably would not crack a smile if they saw a chimpanzee riding a unicycle down 5th Avenue! How many people do you see smiling in traffic jams? However, these cranks must be an insignificant number in contrast to those who *sincerely* desire to possess joy in abundance. Is this something that is even possible?

Webster's New World Dictionary defines *joy* as synonymous with "happy," "glad," and "cheerful." Webster's specifically defines it as "a very glad feeling; happiness; great pleasure; delight." It also refers to the cause or source of delight. Sadly, society equates joy with "having things" or possessions. Granted, it may be easier to tolerate a traffic jam in a Ferrari but, you are still stuck none the less. The joy we speak of is not the same kind as having Publisher's Clearing House show up at your front door or hitting the lottery. There are some things we have been given that money could never buy.

The above definitions only define the expression of the pleasing emotions associated with joy. People fail to consider the reasons of joy, the conditions in which it is expressed or how long joy really lasts. Joy in the Bible grants much more complex qualities than these definitions specify.

We can build a foundation for joy by simply remembering some of the reasons we find in scripture. We have been given the breath of life. **Genesis 2:7**- "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

God gave us His Commandments and Holy Days, His plan of salvation for us (**Exodus 20, Lev. 23**). God gave us His only Son (**John 3:16**).

God gave us His promise of eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:23- “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God gave us His Holy Spirit at baptism.

Acts 2:38- “Then Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

We have been adopted into the Family of God.

2 Corinthians 6:18- “And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says *the* Lord Almighty.”

We shall reign as kings and priests in God’s Kingdom. A tremendous honor and blessings to those who are obedient and endure to the end.

Revelation 1:5-6- “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, And has made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity.

Amen.”

Revelation 5:10- “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.”

Aside from the other countless blessings we have been given, these few scriptures listed should put joy in us that nothing could compare to. The fact we woke up this morning and are here is also worth mentioning.

Joy is not necessarily synonymous with laughter. **Proverbs 14:13-** “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that joy *is* heaviness.”

This notes that laughter and pleasure often hide grief and sorrow. We have mentioned before of a TV commercial for a prescription drug that helps people with depression in which the patient carries around a “smiley face” on a handle to mask their true feelings. Sometimes laughter can be “untimely” due to nervousness or in the case of some politicians, a lack of grey matter...

We know that joy, like love are fruits of God’s Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Could joy be created in us in a different way? Like love, joy is not a creation of the natural mind but the product of the Holy Spirit of God. If true joy cannot be produced through our natural mind, then we cannot expect to find it without

seeking it through God and His Holy Spirit. Sure, we may experience a limited version of what the world may think is joy but it is paled in comparison by what God desires implanted in us.

For us to experience biblical joy, the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, we need to grow in the godly inner qualities that we do not naturally possess.

Romans 8:5-7- “For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.”

Anything we do of our own flesh, love for example, is a mere shadow of God’s love. It is the same with joy. Until our faith matures and we become completely confident we are certain of God’s presence and direction in our life, we will not experience the fullness of satisfaction God desires for us. We must choose to have a personal relationship with Him every single day.

Psalms 46:10- “Be still, and know that I am God! I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”

Biblical joy is inseparable from our relationship with God. Our knowledge and understanding of His purpose of life, His promises and the hope of living with Him and Jesus Christ our Savior for eternity will lead us to this eternal joy.

Psalm 16:11- “You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Our joy is the sign that our life has found its reason for being, our creation purpose! This is a revelation of God. We know that no one can come to Him and find the purpose of life unless He, by His Holy Spirit, calls us (**John 6:44**) and reveals it.

1 Corinthians 2:10- “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.”

We are told to rejoice repeated throughout the scriptures. In fact, it is our Christian duty to rejoice in the Lord. **Philippians 3:1-** “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in *the* Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you *is* not troublesome, but for you *it is* safe.”

Philippians 4:4- “Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

1 Thessalonians 5:16- “Rejoice always!”

1 Peter 1:8- “Whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, and rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory;”

Granted, it may never be easy to be joyful in every situation, but again it is a choice.

The type of joy that is a fruit of God’s Holy Spirit is in that realization that God is working His purpose in our lives to bring us and transform us into His image. We have the peace and joy of knowing He will see it through.

Philippians 1:6- “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”

Biblical joy begins when God calls, and we hear the gospel, understand, and believe it. It requires action on our part. You can choose and believe all you want but we must DO what God’s word says and specifically the way He says to do it.

Jesus read **Isaiah 61:1-3** when He began His ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me because the LORD has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To preach the

acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; To appoint to those who mourn in Zion, giving to them beauty for ashes, the oil of *joy* for mourning, the mantle of praise for the spirit of heaviness; so that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.”

For the world, the joy of the Lord may be bizarre and also vague to the ones who do not possess it. Disobeying His Commandments and seeking to worship Him in man’s ways will never fully bring understanding. Albeit, there are joyful folks in every denomination of “Churchianity” but their joy will never be complete.

But, for the true believer in Jesus Christ, the ones who actually DO His Commandments and keep His Sabbaths and Holy Days, their baptism brings the infilling of God’s Holy Spirit which will open the door to fully understanding His word and plan for mankind.

As we abide *in* Jesus, the True Vine, we are the branches. The fruit we produce, including joy, is His doing. “I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because *apart from Me you can do nothing.*”- **John 15:5**. Jesus is the ultimate Source of our joy as we are united in Him.

When we do experience joy, how quickly does Satan swoop in, and steal it from us? “Praise Pirates” one Pastor I know used to call them, the things that destroy our joy and make it short lived. Even if our source of joy seems secure, it can be short-lived sometime. Aging, health, death, taxes and so on, all the things that come at us as human beings will have an impact on our joy. Sometimes a little brevity can lighten the burden. Again, God does have a sense of humor, He created it!

As children of God, we can suffer pain, sorrow, and heartache from a multitude of sources in his life, but the joy of the Lord in us will always lift us above them because His joy is greater than any negative circumstance that might occur.

Neh. 8:10- “Then he said to them, “Go, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for *whom* nothing is prepared, for *this day is* holy to our Lord. And do not be sorry, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Most of the trials we face are in reality, a test, *or* a lesson. As difficult as they can be, instead of hindering our faith, adverse circumstances can actually enhance our joy. It depends on our reaction to them.

James 1:2-4- “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in

anything.” I always picture Paul and Silas in prison, in chains hanging on the wall after they had been beaten. They were arrested without a cause and yet they sang praise unto the Lord. We know how that ended.

Acts 16:24-26- “After receiving this command, he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks. But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so great that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed.”

Faith can move mountains and evidently it can also knock down prison walls. Faith building is a source of joy.

God is aware of all things that happen to His children.

Matthew 10:28-30- “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a coin? And *yet* not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father *taking account of it*. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” The fact that our Creator is so involved with us is overwhelming.

Regular prayer and Bible study will build and strengthen our personal relationship with our Creator. This leads to repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God.

Isaiah 65:17-19- “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And the former things will not be remembered, nor come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever *in that* which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and I will joy in My people; and the voice of weeping will no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” What God has in store for our future alone is cause for great joy.

1 Corinthians 2:9- “But according as it is written, “The eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Walking in righteousness and being at one with God is key to finding Biblical joy. Again, it is a simple choice.

Proverbs 17:22- “A merry heart does good *like* a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones

Psalms 16:11- “You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Psalm 32:11- “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.”

Psalm 97:12- “Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous ones, and praise His holy name.”

Habakkuk 3:18- “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

Above all, we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for His sacrifice and the salvation by His shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins, for the hope and promise in His resurrection and Kingdom to come. **1 Thessalonians 1:6-** “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having accepted the Word in much persecution with *the joy of the Holy Spirit,*”

The joy of the Lord, our gladness of heart, is present even through the trials of this life. We know we are children of God, and no one can snatch us away from Him.

John 10:28–29- “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish *forever*; and no one shall take them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one has the power to seize them from My Father’s hand.”

We are heirs to an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”

1 Peter 1:4- “Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us,”

Matthew 6:20- “But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor rust spoils, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”

The joy of the Lord is the gladness in our hearts. This comes from knowing God, abiding in Jesus Christ our Savior, and walking in obedience to God’s way of life. Coupled with our heartfelt prayers and being filled with His Holy Spirit, our joys will grow from seeking to fulfill God’s creation purpose in our lives. We must do our part to see it come to fruition. Fulfilling our creation purpose according to God’s will be the greatest joy imaginable for us on this Earth. This is why we were born. An even greater joy is awaiting, when we hear Our Savior say, “And his lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant! *Because* you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”-

Matt. 25:21

We know that the joy we have in knowing God’s way of life is different from what an unbeliever’s joy may be. We know that humor and laughter are both created by God and we are to enjoy the things He created for us. We usually touch on the topic of joy around the Feast of Tabernacles, but we need not limit our joy to any

one certain time of year. God pours out His love and grace upon us every day. I can think of no better reason to smile, laugh, and rejoice than this. Amen!

BL-05/06/23