

Joy

Key Verse

"And the disciples were continuously filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." Acts 13:52

Basic Biblical Understanding

Around 700 years prior to Jesus' birth, Isaiah prophesied that joy would accompany Messiah's arrival. In chapter 35 alone, he tells people will "rejoice with rejoicing and shout for joy" (v.2), "the tongue of the mute will shout for joy" (v.6), and "they will find gladness and joy" (v.10). When Jesus was born, the angel told the shepherds, "I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people...there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10). Joy was expected; joy was revealed.

Joy didn't end at Jesus' birth. Joy flowed through His life, His teachings, His ministry, and His followers. Jesus spoke of the full joy He came to bring others (John 15:11; 17:13). He described the kingdom of heaven through the lens of joy (Matthew 13:44). He taught His followers that their sorrow would be turned into joy (John 16:20–22), and throughout the book of Acts, joy characterized Jesus' disciples (Acts 8:8, 13:52, 15:3, 16:34). Joy is found in Christ and joy is manifested in His followers.

What is joy? The Holman Bible Dictionary states, "Joy is the fruit of a right relation with God; the happy state that results from knowing and serving God." Joy is more than circumstantial happiness; joy is the fruit of right relation with God.

How does joy impact a Christian's everyday life? First, our joy is in direct proportion to our walk with Jesus. Jesus brings joy. That does not mean every believer experiences joy. Our joy is in direct proportion to our walk with Jesus. When you see a Christian with joy, you're seeing a Christian who walks intimately with Jesus. The opposite is also true. When you see a Christian without joy, it's the expected result of failing to abide in His presence.

Second, joy is more lived than learned. Joy is not struggling to be happy; it's the natural expression of God living through you. When Paul described the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, he describes joy as an attribute of God's Spirit living through us.

Third, sin interferes with our level of joy. After being confronted in his sin, King David prayed, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice...Create in me a clean heart, O God... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..." (Psalm 51:8–12). Joy is found when abiding in God's presence; likewise, joy is lost when we cling to our sin.

Are you experiencing God's joy today? If not, what is currently interfering with you realizing the full joy of Christ?

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Philippians 4:4
- "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full." John 16:24

Helpful Questions and Application

1. The book of Philippians is a great study on joy. While imprisoned in Rome, the Apostle Paul uses the words "joy," "rejoice," and "joyful" sixteen times. He teaches us that true joy is found in Christ, despite our circumstances. Are you letting circumstances rob you of joy? If so, how can you change that?
2. If joy is "the happy state that results from knowing and serving God," what are you doing today to know and serve God?

Additional Resources

Scripture references: James 1:2–4; Proverbs 17:22; Romans 14:17; Psalm 118:24

WordTruth article: ["Joyful and Worry Free"](#)