

JOY

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self control. Against such things there is no law.
-Galatians 5:22-23

What is Joy and how can we have it?

Joy is a state of being – not an emotion. Joy is the result of choice. For the biblical writers, joy is rooted in God and what he has done for people in general and his people in particular¹

Joy marks the people of God both individually and corporately. This characteristic of God's people is present in the OT but is most evident in the NT. Paul tells the Roman believers that the kingdom of God is marked by righteousness, peace, and joy in or by the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17)¹

Joy comes from salvation.

Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit; it is expected of Christians because it is the natural result of having received salvation. Joy comes on account of what Christ has done, irrelevant of whatever other circumstances are happening in one's life.²

1 Peter 1:8-9 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (ESV)

If you are unsure of your salvation, it makes keeping your joy difficult. Our salvation comes from God and not from ourselves. When we can truly understand that God saved us by His grace and we do not save ourselves with our goodness, we can truly find joy.

Joy is our response to God and not a response to our circumstances. We can be sad but still have joy.

Joy comes from victory.

Our salvation is a result of God's victory over the enemy. The enemy tries to steal our souls, but God's grace is victorious over sin! When Jesus went to the cross to take the punishment for our sins, HE took victory over sin. No matter our circumstances, God still went to the cross for me, He still took my punishment. On my bad days, when people are mean & rude, when my body and mind fail me, God was still victorious over my sin.

There is also joy at victory over enemies. ...joy describes Israel's or an individual's response to victory over an adversary...¹

¹ Litwak, Kenneth D. 2014. "Joy." In *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, edited by Douglas Mangum, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, and Rebekah Hurst. Lexham Bible Reference Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

² Heyink, Brenda. 2016. "Joy." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

1 Samuel 18:6 As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. (ESV)

How can we express joy?

Joy is expressed by rejoicing. *Rejoice: Oral expression of joy*⁴

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (ESV)

There is a joy that Scripture commands. That joy is action that can be engaged in regardless of how the person feels.³

Don't think of an emotion, think of an attitude.

Attitude: a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.⁴

When someone's attitude is good, their actions reflect that attitude, their actions do not reflect their feelings and emotions. When we have an attitude of joy, it will be reflected in our actions.

Action 1: Singing & Shouting – after David comes home victorious in battle, they sing.

1 Samuel 18:7 And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, (ESV)

Psalms 47:1 Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! (ESV)

Action 2: Words

What are we saying to others when good things happen to them?

Part of our human nature makes it hard for us to find joy in the success of other people. Especially if we felt like we deserved what they have, or if their success seems to come at our expense. But, those who live with joy, choose to rejoice with other people. Especially in the Salvation of others. Not just when they are initially saved, but in the thought that God's salvation is continual in their lives.

Romans 12:5 Rejoice with them that rejoice... (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 3:6-9 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— ⁷for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, (ESV)

What are we saying in our own times of suffering?

The Bible encourages us to have joy in all situations. Even in struggle and trial.

James 1:2-3 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (ESV)

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (ESV)

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. (ESV)

³ Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. 1988. "Joy." In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2:1225. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

⁴ Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press