

Hi everyone,

My name is Jenny Jones Beach and I would like to talk to you today about Joy. The kind of Joy you can only get by abiding in God's love.

While we focus on being fruitful and free in 2023 I want to encourage you to seek the joy of the Lord.

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit that can only be obtained through growth and maturing. Just like saplings cannot produce fruit when first planted, neither can we produce fruit without first becoming mature in Christ. Growth is the key to producing Spiritual fruit. That is why it is so crucial to stay connected to the vine, by abiding in Christ and developing a relationship with our Father.

John 15:10 says- if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abided in His love.

These things I have spoken to you and that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full.

God's joy is the settled assurance that He works all things for my good.

Jesus speaks of two keys to receiving God's joy. The first is keep His commandments. Love your God with all your heart all your mind and all your soul and love your neighbor like yourself. The second is abiding in His love. How do we do that? We abide in Him through seeking Him, getting to know Him, growth by staying in His word and being an active member of the body of Christ in your church. Being active, volunteering, and getting connected through small groups all help you to stay in His love, grow mature and produce bountiful fruit.

I can speak to this through personal experience. For years I wasn't attending church and became depressed and feeling down. I still loved God, even prayed and read his word and would watch church online occasionally. Really all that wasn't enough, I wasn't really abiding in Him. I was gliding through my time with God. I did not have the fruit of joy. When I started attending church regularly and joining connected groups and volunteering to serve in the church I noticed a change. Giving of my time spurred me into a desire to abide in God.

I became a doer of the word, not just a hearer and was connected to His Kingdom. I found that fellowship was also a key to experience the fruit of joy in my life.

Are you experiencing the void of joy in your spiritual walk? Ask yourself if you are fully committed to God as He is committed to you. Ask God to show you where you can step out and get connected with others at church, through volunteering, joining a connected group or corporate prayer. As you grow, you will delight in the fruit of joy that will be produced, as you seek to become fruitful and free in 2023.

Please, join me in a prayer.

Lord, thank you for your promise of Joy. Please reveal to me the area I should serve in. Lord, what do I need to grow in? Show me what connect group will help me to abide in you more.