

JOY

A joyful life is a life lived according to the Divine Design.

I wanna say that again. You were designed by God to live a life bubbling over with JOY.

That can be hard to process cause life is no Joy-fest.

The biblical story and our own experience shows how we live in a world that's been corrupted by our own selfishness. It's marked by death and loss, and this is where biblical faith offers a unique perspective on joy.

It's an attitude God's people adopt, not because of happy circumstances but because of their hope in God's love and promise.

And we choose joy because we want to be like our Heavenly Father.

God is Joyful, not miserable.

Think about that. When you picture God, in your mind, what do you see?

Does your God smile? Laugh? Dance? Shout (not holler)? Celebrate?

To be like God you must have the right image of God.

Zep 3:14-17 (NAS95) Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult **[rejoice, be joyful, be happy, be pleased, be glad, be delighted, be elated, be ecstatic, be euphoric, be overjoyed,]** with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! [15] The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. [16] In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. [17] "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. **He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love,* He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.**

*Zep 3:17 (NLT) For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

(AMP) and in His love He will be silent and make no mention [of past sins, or even recall them]; He will exult over you with singing.

We may find it hard imagine that we could bring pleasure to the heart of God; but this verse assures us that God definitely thinks differently.

The time of Christ is prophesied to be a time of great joy; it is a time to rejoice.

To describe this future, which is our time, Zephaniah uses four terms for joy: "**sing,**" "**shout,**" "**be glad,**" and "**rejoice**"

Redeemed men and women were to enter into the exaltation of the triumphant Lord "with all [their] heart

In other words, LIVE as if HE WON!

All fear and apprehension over being punished are gone, for the Lord "**has taken away your judgments**"

"He has cast out your enemy"

"The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst" (vs 15). No longer will He be present only in His shekinah glory, or as the Angel of the Lord, He will personally reside "in [their and our] midst." Therefore, **"you shall see disaster no more"**

Isa 61:1-3 (NASB) The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD anointed me To bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim release to captives And freedom to prisoners; [2] To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, [3] To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, **The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The cloak of praise instead of a disheartened spirit.** So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

Isa 61:7 (NLT) Instead of shame and dishonor, you will enjoy a double share of honor. You will possess a double portion of prosperity in your land, and **everlasting joy will be yours.**

The oil of gladness is mentioned many times.

Heb 1:8-9 (NLT) But to the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice. [9] You love justice and hate evil. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else."

The Character of God is JOY.

God never does anything out of character - you do, I do, others do but God doesn't.

This is what the scriptures mean when its written that with God there is no "variableness," "no shadow of turning."

If it ain't really like God then it ain't God!

So if God is ever Joyful then HE is forever Joyful

So when the scriptures say, The Father anointed the Son with the oil of Joy Here the oil of joy refers to the Holy Spirit who bestows joy

Rom 14:17 (TPT) For the kingdom of God is not a matter of rules about food and drink, but is in the realm of the Holy Spirit, filled with righteousness, peace, and joy.

A life lived in the Spirit aka a Spiritual life is one of JOY

Now remember what I shared with you just a few weeks ago.

In life there are many things that don't make us happy, but happiness and Joy are not the same thing.

This is why even in a time of sorrow we can be Joy-filled.

Its undeniable, Biblically speaking, and we are biblical right? That to be Spirit-filled is to be Joy-filled.

- Does the Holy Spirit leave you in hard times? Then neither does JOY
- Does the Holy Spirit evaporate in sad times? Then neither does JOY

In Acts 13 Paul and Barnabus went to Antioch and the Word of God spread like wild-fire.

Yet the wealthy religious and business leaders raised up a mob and drove Paul and Barnabus out of town.

Did Paul and Barnabus leave town sad and dejected, feeling like failures and mad at everyone?

Act 13:51-52 (TPT) As they left, they shook the dust off their feet as a sign of protest against them, and they went on to the city of Iconium. [52] They left the new converts in Antioch overflowing with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Joy is the outward manifestation of the inner experience of grace.

The joy they knew and felt was not just *given* by the Lord's Spirit. It was the Lord's Spirit welling up within them.

The reactions of people—acceptance or rejection—could never be the basis of their joy.

So the Holy Spirit infuses us with this spiritual characteristic - Joy and God expects us to so embrace this “oil” that it becomes part of our character as well.

- God looks for Joy in our service to Him
- God looks for Joy in our offerings
- God looks for Joy in our praise
- God looks for Joy in our shouts

What happens when He doesn't find Joy in our service to Him?

Deu 28:47-48 (NASB) "Since you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a cheerful heart, in gratitude for the abundance of all things, [48] you will serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and devoid of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you.

Is this punishment or prediction?

Consider this

A Holy Ghost filled life is a Joy filled life - so if we have no joy we are not living in the Spirit.

Joy is to LIVE as if HE WON!

So if we choose to allow our circumstances to be greater than his promises

If we choose sadness over gladness we choose impotence over power and our enemy gains an advantage over us.

Jas 1:2 (NASB) Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, (*when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties*)

Normal people do not enjoy trials. In fact, most of us do everything possible to avoid the trials of life.

Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials.

Trials are seldom met with joy. However, James not only instructs us to face trials with joy, but with *pure* joy. In the Greek text, the word translated as pure is the word *pas* which is a primary word meaning all, every, and whole or thoroughly.

James is telling us not to "fake it." We should have a joy which is neither contrived nor forced as some impossible religious obligation.

To the contrary, we should have pure, unadulterated, all-encompassing, thorough joy! It should be the "real thing."

How do you do this? Faith!

What we need do is learn to access our JOY

Php 4:4 (AMPC) Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, gladden yourselves in Him]; again I say, Rejoice! [Psa 37:4]

There is nothing you now need or will ever need that God has not already provided for you.

That's good news, good enough to cause a shout of Joy - if you believe that God is that good.

Psa 90:15 (NLT) Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good.

If you have known days of depression believe God for days of gladness filled with good.

Amen!