

JOY — God's Joy

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We're doing a systematic theology on what Joy is over July, and explore:

- God's Joy
- Gift of joy
- Choosing & cultivating joy
- Joy of Ministry
- Joy of mission

What is Joy?

Per Dr. Allan Schore's research, we are at our best selves when joy is driving and the predominant emotion at work in us.

Joy is primarily relational, and the regions of our brain that are concerned with relationships direct the other logic and task-related centers.

In other words, joy is the experience of being glad to see and be with one another.

Joy can be amplified when you sit and tell stories hashing over the past or anticipating the future. When joy is shared, it is amplified in our hearts and minds because joy is relational.



If joy is primarily relational, you can't have joy on your own without a relationship. **Most of our addictions** form in us through isolated, individualistic experiences seeking joy in other places rather than right relationships with God and other people

The good things in our lives that become the ultimate things that replace relationships actually begin to rob us of true joy.

No matter where we are, where we've been in our past and whatever addiction we've had can be broken through realignment with joy and right relationship with God.

| Joy is the business of heaven — C.S. Lewis

How To Rewire My Brain?

| The most important thing about you is what you think about God. —
A.W. Tozer

This is because we live our lives out of the image we have of God, and conversely the image we have of ourselves.

So how do we think of God rightly? Let's begin with his joy.

God's Joy

God Takes Joy & Delight in His Creation.

| God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

| *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ge 1:31.

He even rejoices over our personal creation:

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ps 139:13–14.

The knowledge that David has is that God delighted in creating him, and we can know that full well too.

And yet David is aware that he is sinful from birth.

David dives into the reality that we are more sinful than we could ever acknowledge to ourselves and at the same time we're more loved and delighted in than we can ever imagine.

Joy Is A Fruit of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is working his joy in us.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:22–23.

This list is a description of God's character. When you think of God's character, does this list pop into your head?

Jesus Is the Fullness of Joy

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Col 1:15.

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 14:8–11.



Jesus is the fulness of the Father. Looking at Jesus and worshipping him transforms us into God's image.

The Joy of Jesus Is Relational

Much of the Western Church is anemic about the role and impact of the Holy Spirit.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 15:11.

All healthy joyful relationships have rules, if they're working well.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **If you keep my commands**, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 15:9–10.

This is far from a works-based gospel, but a relational ideal of how love is worked out between two different people.

We can inform others how we are loved well, and when that is honored, we are loved. But we feel dishonored and unloved when people don't listen to us. And vice versa.



God cares more about our joy than we do. And if we think we know better than God, we're accepting counterfeits of joy that rob from us.

- Obedience to God, his instructions, teaching, and rules, is how to remain in God's love, and listening to each other and respecting each other is how to remain in each other's love. Cultivating this love leads to an amplification of joy in each of our lives.

Let us now take joy for granted, for God cares more about our joy than we do, and wants us to be in a relationship with each other.