

Joy

Opener: How would you fill in this blank: I'd be happy if _____.

Scripture: Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Psalm 90:14

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Luke 2:8-12

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

Nehemiah said, “Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10b

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4

Discussion Questions

1. Psalm 90 was written by Moses, but surely David loved it and prayed the prayer in verse 14. There are more than 2,700 references to joy, gladness, pleasure, celebration, laughter, and delight in the Bible. Our joy level matters to God. How is joy distinct from happiness? What's the opposite of joy? What's the difference between worldly joy and joy that comes from the Lord? In addition to singing, how can we express our joy in the Lord? Psalm 90:14
2. When the angels announced Jesus' birth, they referred to Him as Savior, Messiah, and Lord and proclaimed, “good news that will cause great joy.” What do these titles mean, and how do they capture the reason for the joy we have in Him? Luke 2:8-12
3. Galatians 5:22 identifies joy as a fruit of the Spirit. What makes it a fruit of the Spirit and what's significant about it being a fruit?
4. Nehemiah 8:10 says, “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” What's the relationship between joy and strength? How has joy contributed to your emotional, mental, and spiritual resilience? Examples?
5. Joy is linked with trials and faith in James 1:2-3. How do joy and faith work together to accomplish God's work in us during trials? James 1:2-4
6. During the Christmas season we rejoice and celebrate Jesus together in many ways. How does being in community with other believers increase our joy and grow our faith in every season of life?

Wrap Up: Joy is not happiness. Happiness is attached to circumstances that come and go; joy is eternal. Happiness is earthbound while joy is heaven sent. Joy transcends all earthly power and makes it possible for God's people to share in Christ's victory, even when they're suffering. When we have the joy of the Lord, we have confidence that God will make a way, regardless of our circumstances. As C. S. Lewis said, “Joy is the serious business of heaven.” God is intent on filling us with what Jesus came to give us—joy! Adapted from *The Body Revelation*, by Alisa Keeton.