

GENERATION NOW

Joy To The World

May 27, 2018

May
27

We all want to be happy. It's a desire as universal as our want for water, food and fresh air. The word *joy* is defined as "a feeling of great pleasure and happiness." The key to attaining true joy is found in our relationship with God. And that can be experienced regardless of the circumstances of life. **(Romans 15:13)** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. There are going to be circumstances in your life where you just don't have any joy, no matter how hard you try. And that's when you have to turn to God. Have you ever asked God to give you joy while in a dark place? Have you ever thanked God while living in the midst of joy?

The body is made up of muscles, nerves, electrons, atoms and molecules. When those molecules move, that is not a moral event. The body doesn't have right and wrong. A movement of my arm back and forth has no moral significance, until I tell it by my will or my emotion to punch somebody that it becomes negative. Or hug somebody in need, it then becomes positive. Our soul imparts virtue, right or wrong, to the physical parts of our life. And the Bible clearly says, "it is right to feel joy in God." The fruit of the [Holy] Spirit is love, **JOY**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" **(Galatians 5:22-23)**. Therefore, the joy in our soul overflowing towards God is coming from the work of the Holy Spirit.

(Philippians 3:1) says, "Rejoice in the Lord." How do you rejoice in the Lord if you don't know anything about the Lord? How do you rejoice in the Lord if you are not seeing things about the Lord that cause joy to rise up in your heart? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't just flip a switch, and you rejoice with no mental content whatsoever. The Holy Spirit is given, according to **(John 16:14)**, to glorify Jesus Christ, which means the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of my heart to see the beauty of Christ. When I see Christ in all that he is doing, and all that he is, then my heart is drawn out in joy towards him. The Holy Spirit bears this fruit by causing us to see the beauty of Jesus Christ.

The Fullness of Joy

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

- 1: Does the fact that Jesus is coming for you give you joy?
- 2: What does your joy-gauge show? Is your joy low, medium or filled up?
- 3: Did you find comfort in Jesus' words to the disciples?

The Fruit of Joy

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

- 1: Does the Apostle Paul list the fruits in order of importance (1 Cor 13:1-3)?
- 2: Did you know that joy was a fruit of the Holy Spirit of God?
- 3: What is the most important fruit of all?

May
27

Joy in the Lord

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

- 1: Can joy include food and drink and celebrations?
- 2: Does joy come naturally?
- 3: Why is joy a source of strength?
- 4: Who do you know that shows the most joy?

I want to underline the great truth that Christian joy does not die when sorrows abound. Joy and sorrow in the Christian life are not sequential, but simultaneous. We are called to rejoice always, and yet sorrow breaks like waves over our lives.

(Psalm 30:5) says, "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning," which is sequential. I am aware of that. I don't think it is a contradiction, though, because there is a kind of joy that is pain-free, sorrow-free, and without tears. God does that all the time for us. We're not experiencing the pain because something happened to take away that pain in the morning. But it doesn't always happen that way. Even that night before when the weeping is abounding, joy has not gone. It hasn't died.

Paul commands us, "Finally, brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble for me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh" **(Philippians 3:1-2)**. He didn't say, "Rejoice, and then stop rejoicing and deal with the conflict." No. "Rejoice in the Lord... and watch out for the dogs." This is simultaneous.

In **(Philippians 3:18)** Paul describes these folks again: They are enemies of the cross of which I have told you before and now tell you again with tears. Paul is modeling weeping over the dogs and evil workers, even as he commands us to rejoice in the midst of the conflict. Just a few verses later, in chapter 4, he says (and repeats), "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice" **(Philippians 4:4)**. The repetition says: Yes, I did mean to say always, because I have already modeled for you how you rejoice and weep at the same time.

Joy isn't like happiness which is based upon happenings or whether things are going well or not. No, joy remains even amidst the suffering. Joy is not happiness. Joy is an emotion that's acquired by the anticipation, acquisition or even the expectation of something great or wonderful. It could be described as exhilaration, delight, sheer gladness and can result from a great success or a very beautiful or wonderful experience like a wedding or graduation but the definition of joy that the world holds is not nearly as amazing as biblical joy but joy is also gift.