

The Fruit of Joy

~ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore. ~ Ps 16:11

Joy is often associated with happiness or the blessedness of our situation. Other terms that are often used are: joyful, rejoice, gladness, or mirth. Joy or rejoicing is a fruit that is brought into the life of a devoted Christian by the Spirit of God. The word is used many times in both the Old and New Testaments. Some have counted as much as 133 times the Greek word "Chara" is used in the New Testament. While all kinds of people can have emotional feelings of joy over various things, the Bible seems to be using this word (both in Old and New Testaments) with reference to the person who has a relationship with God that was made possible by their obedient faith. This joy does not seem to be an emotional feeling for the moment and then it is gone, but something that is lasting.

Why Joy

1. Joy over a right relationship with God:

- Ps.16:11
- Ps.51:12
- Ps.35:9
- Isa.61:10
- Matt 13:20
- Matt 13:44
- 1Pet 1:8
- Rom 15:13

2. There is also an emphasis upon joy that comes to a Christian from another Christian being faithful and obedient to God and His Word:

- Phil 2:2
- Phil 4:1
- 1Thess 2:19-20
- 3 John 4

3. Various things that bring Joy to the child of God:

- Prov 21:15
- Isa 29:19
- Jer 15:16
- Luke 2:10
- Heb 13:17
- 1 John 1:4

Circumstances

It would seem that this "joy" in Gal. 5:22 does not depend upon external circumstances, but in spite of such. This joy comes because of a relationship with God that is deep and abiding.

- John 15:11
- John 17:13

This joy is there in the midst of "manifold temptations! (Jas. 1:2). It is there, with deepness, even in the midst of persecution of all kinds (Matt. 5:10-12). This joy comes from living righteously and living in peace with our fellow-man (Rom. 14:16-19). It should be obvious that the "joyful" life can be lived in the midst of any kind of circumstances. The devout child of God finds joy in truth, righteousness, godliness, and faithfulness to God (1 Cor. 13:6; Rom. 12:9). And because the above is true, no man with all of his vile ways can take away our joy (John 16:22).

Possibly, one of the best examples to show the above concept is that of our Lord. The Hebrew writer stated: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (12:2). What he had to endure was not joyful, but the outcome of what he endured brought salvation to many souls. Thus, the Christian who sows tears because of the terrible circumstances of life can also reap joy because of his relationship with God (Ps. 126:5; Matt. 5:4; Jer. 31:13). He can also make a joyful noise unto the Lord in spite of those circumstances (Ps. 66:1).

We believe that "joy" is a state of mind based upon our relationship to God and the promises of God. It is not some emotional feeling of exuberance for the moment and then gone; but rather an abiding outlook and quality of life that is so needed in the world in which we live. As long as we maintain our relationship with God, our joy should be full (Rev. 2:10).

My Notes and Thoughts

In your own words, how can Joy produce victory?

How can Joy produce fulfillment?

In your opinion, can joy protect against oppression?

What are some things you are joyful about?

If circumstances, people or things can't steal your joy, what are some triggers that cause you to lose sight of joy _____

What mindset or attitude is causing you not to choose joy?

What is a nugget you gained from this session?

What is one new action you are intentionally adding to increase your joy?
