

The Fruit Of The Spirit #3 - JOY

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **JOY**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Gal 5:22-23)*

Romans 8:5-6 (ESV) ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Webster’s Dictionary on Joy: “the passion or emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good; pleasurable feelings or emotions caused by success, good fortune, and the like, or by a rational prospect of possessing what we love or desire; gladness”

Romans 15:13 (ESV) ¹³May the God of hope fill you with **all joy and peace in believing**, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope**.

Romans 14:17 (ESV) ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of **righteousness and peace and joy** in the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord **always**. Again I will say, rejoice!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶Rejoice **always**, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Joy = Deep, Lasting Happiness (like peace that passes understanding)

(excerpts from Randy Alcorn interview <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/is-happiness-different-from-joy>)

In Acts 14:17 the apostle Paul, who is speaking to heathen Gentiles at Lystra, said of God, “He did not leave himself without a witness, since he did what is good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and satisfying your hearts with food and happiness.” Some translations say “gladness.” They could say joy.

Even an unbeliever can have a certain taste of happiness. When an atheist takes a walk in the woods and sees the beauty—he may in his own way celebrate the beauty and see a deer and just marvel at it. The happiness he’s experiencing is coming from the hand of God. The fact that people don’t believe in God doesn’t change the fact that God is actually the only source of happiness.

David Murray identifies six different kinds of happiness. He talks about nature happiness, social happiness, vocational happiness, physical happiness, intellectual happiness, and humor happiness. All of those in God’s common grace are available to all, except the seventh one which David calls “spiritual happiness.” Spiritual joy is the only true, lasting happiness.

Abraham spoke to the rich man in hell saying, “Remember that in your lifetime you received your good things” (Luke 16:25). You had your opportunity, and God in his common grace gave you an experience of good things, including tastes of happiness, because God is the primary source of happiness. But your happiness is over now that you have died separated from God.

Proposition: The scriptures teach that there is only one way to possess the constant, abiding joy that should characterize the life and spirit of every Christian.

Let’s see if we can be convicted by the Holy Spirit of that one way, and thus commit to putting it into practice.

I. What Do I Believe I Should Be Pursuing? (*why am I here? what is my life?*)

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (ESV) ¹³The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

God gives me a purpose greater than myself (***trusting in and serving the will of God***), one that is true and fully satisfying and results in eternal happiness.

If I pursue my own purposes before God's will, I will remain dissatisfied, suffer difficulties, be filled with despair, and ultimately, suffer everlasting destruction.

Best to get my thinking right, now.

The Treasure in the Field, The Pearl of Great Price:

Matthew 13:44-46 (ESV) ⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. **Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.** ⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶who, on finding one pearl of great value, **went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

The Joy of the 72 Disciples: Luke 10:17-20 (ESV) ¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, **but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**"

FAITH, CONVICTION, CERTAINTY IN PURSUIT OF THE WILL OF GOD:

1 Peter 4:19 (ESV) ¹⁹Therefore let those who **suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.**

Hebrews 10:34 (ESV) ³⁴For you had compassion on those in prison, and **you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property**, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

1 Peter 1:5-9 (ESV) ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶**In this you rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, **you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory**, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

James 1:2-4 (ESV) ²Count it **all joy**, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴**And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**

II. The Christian's Abiding Joy:

- With joy we pursue **WORSHIP**. We overflow in praise of God's excellencies.
Psalms 100:1-5 (NKJV) ¹ Make a **joyful shout** to the Lord, all you lands!

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NASB) ⁹But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;** ¹⁰for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- With joy we **pursue EVANGELISM**. We spread the joy of salvation to others. (we tend to share what we take joy in).
- With joy we **pursue PURITY**. We respond to God’s grace with gratitude and self-control. **1 John 3:1-3 (NKJV)** ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³**And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**
- With joy we **pursue SERVICE**. We sacrifice and give to others because it shows Jesus. **Acts 20:35 (ESV)** ³⁵In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’
- With joy we **pursue BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER**. We deepen & strengthen our joy in God. **Psalms 119:14-16** - “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word” .

III. Satan’s Lies Prevent Joy

Pursuit of Money/Mammon (*Satan wants us to be prosperous, because our prosperity and abundance often lure us away from our Creator*)

1 Timothy 6:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

James 4:13-17 (NKJV) ¹³Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow [£]we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; ¹⁴whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” ¹⁶But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Lip Service/Misplaced Affections/Priorities

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

People can fall in love with things or activities that have no eternal merit. **Children’s sports** can be a thrilling activity for kids to pursue. What if those sports begin to adversely affect the spiritual involvement and development of your family?

Parasitic Sins

Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with

endurance the race that is set before us,

Many people feel reluctant to pray or read their Bible when they know they have these issues in their lives.

Discouragement, Self-Pity, Fear (Peter walking on the water)

John 14:1 (ESV) ¹“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

1 John 5:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask **anything according to his will** he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

IV. Where There Is Forgiveness, There Is Joy!

Psalms 32:1-6 (ESV) ¹Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ³For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up ⁵as by the heat of summer. ⁵I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. ⁶Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

David in the **32nd Psalm**...

- begins by stating the “blessedness” (or joy) of one whose sins are forgiven – **(1-2)**
- describes how the guilt of his sin affected him **(3-4)**
- at last he confessed his sin and God forgave him **(5-6)**
- describes the joy that the righteous (*the forgiven*) can experience **(10-11)**

The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in...

Psalms 51:10-12 (NKJV) ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²**Restore to me the joy of Your salvation**, and uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.