

Possessing the Joy of the Lord (as with all fruit of the Spirit) is a direct result of our abiding in Christ. What does it mean to abide in Him?

1. Full Surrender: John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, _____ in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

The branch has no life, purpose or ability outside of the vine. It's existent is entirely devoted to the vine. This is the surrendered relationship we must have with Christ if we are to bear the fruit of Joy. Your lack of Joy is an indication that you have not surrendered all to Jesus.

Andrew Murray said: "God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him. The condition for obtaining God's full blessing is absolute surrender to Him."

2. Dependence: John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for *without me ye can do nothing*.

For His joy, we must depend entirely on Him. What can a branch do without the vine? Anything we do of any eternal significance will be done by the power of Jesus Christ. We must continually depend upon Him.

3. Rest: John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

The fact of Christ's love for us should cause us to rest. No searching this world for true love or fulfillment, but simply resting in His love for us.

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* We do not labour to produce fruit, we rest in Him, and He produces the fruit of the Spirit, including Joy.

4. Obedience: John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Jesus said in John 15, that he spoke these things that we might have Joy. In verse 10 he tells us to keep His commandments. Obedience to Christ's commands is directly responsible for producing Joy.

To have Joy we must abide in Christ. We must give our lives entirely to Him and allow his Spirit to control us. Disobedience to Him always results in a loss of Joy. David's prayer in Psalm 51 was one of longing for the restoration of the Lord's Joy. **Have you lost His Joy? Surrender, Depend, Rest and Obey and your Joy will be Full!**

📖 Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, __ __ __ . . .

Christian philosopher C.S. Lewis has said "I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for joy". Galatians 5:22 says that the fruit of the Spirit is Joy, but what is joy?

First let's consider what Joy is not. Joy is not the same as Happiness. Happiness depends upon circumstances or "happenings". Happiness is an expression of pleasure with outward circumstances. Therefore, when circumstances around us are dark or unpleasant, our happiness fails. Joy is much different. *Christian Joy is an inward contentment and pleasure in the person of Jesus Christ.*

📖 Read Romans 5:10,11. According to these verses, in whom do we have Joy? _____. And *through* whom? _____.

The Christian should have Joy in God, through Jesus Christ, because he has reconciled us to himself, and now lives that we might be saved. We have an unchanging God who desires that we possess enduring and abiding Joy.

📖 Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in _____ A __ __ __ __: and again I say, Rejoice.

📖 John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might _____ in you, and that your joy might be full.

Ask yourself the question "What do I really take joy in?" If our joy is found in people, possessions, or pursuits it will eventually fail. Do you truly *re-joyce in the Lord*? Or are you attempting to find joy and satisfaction elsewhere?

📖 Read Ecclesiastes 2:10,11. Solomon sought to find Joy in all the things of earth, including his own labour. What was his conclusion?

...all was _____ and vexation of spirit, and there was no _____ under the sun.

Joy is not mere happiness. Joy is not an artificial grin pasted on the face of a Christian. Joy is a deep-seated satisfaction and contentment in the person of Jesus Christ. True Joy can only be found in an obedient life to Jesus.

Pleasures, happiness and circumstances all change, but Jesus and His Joy are unchanging and available to you. **Do you have misplaced Joy?**


Why Joy?

Friday

Yesterday we learned what Joy is, and that Joy is available to all Christians. Now let's ask the question *Why it's important for the Christian to have joy?*

It is Required to Reach the Lost. Key to the Christian's testimony is the presence of Joy in his life. What makes us different from the world? When we tell others about Jesus and invite them to be saved, what about our life would cause them to make that decision? Do they see a continuous joy? A *continual* joy in the life of a Christian can become a *contagious* joy to other Christians and to the lost!

In Psalm 51 we read David's prayer to God after his sin with Bathsheba:

 Psalms 51:12 Restore unto me the _____ of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and _____ shall be _____ unto thee.

David desired the joy of the Lord, what did he indicate would be the result of the restoration of this Joy? _____.

Knowing the gospel message is not enough. If your unsaved friends and family cannot see something different in your life, like the abiding joy of the Lord, it is unlikely that you will be a successful witness.

It is Strength for Service. In the book of Nehemiah we read about a great work for the Lord. Nehemiah desired to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. In the midst of this work, the people read and heard the word of God. They wept because of their ignorance and disobedience to God. In Nehemiah 8:10, he encouraged the people with these words:

 ..neither be ye sorry; for the _____ of the Lord is your _____.

It is the joy of the Lord that will encourage us in His work and strengthen us for service.

It is Steadfast in Sorrow. Every man, woman and child will experience sorrow in their life. In **John 16:20**, Jesus was preparing his disciples for the great sorrow they would feel after his death. What did he say would happen to their sorrow?


Jesus is our perfect example. According to **Heb 12:2** What enabled him to endure the sorrow and suffering of the cross?


The Bible says that Jesus was a *man of sorrows* (Isa 53:3), yet it also says he was *anointed with gladness* (Ps 45:7). His example is one of overcoming sorrow through joy! Are you a poor witness, faltering in service, or overcome with sorrow? The answer to all of these is the Joy of the Lord.

Whose Joy?

Saturday

Let's look back at Gal 5:22 But the fruit of _____ is love, _____, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...

 John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that _____ might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

 John 17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have _____ fulfilled in themselves.

Q. According to these verses, whose Joy are we to possess? _____.

Have you ever met a superficial Christian? A great turn-off to those in the world who are seeking answers is that of the phoney Christian who is faking joy! We've all seen the forced smile and semi-enthusiastic tones of the joyless Christian who is forcing the appearance of joy. Joy is not to be manufactured in our lives, it is to be produced by the Spirit and displayed by our countenance, demeanor and reactions. The genuine Christian displaying real joy is a powerful witness to the unsaved.


When we display the joy of Jesus in our lives, through tribulation (2 Cor 7:4), sorrow (John 16:20), loss (Heb 10:34) and affliction (1 Thess 1:6), we are showing something to the world that they cannot explain outside of God.


It is our *reaction* to difficulties that displays our true character. The Joyful Christian will display the character of Jesus Christ when circumstances are both good and bad.

How to Have Joy.

We read in John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Jesus spoke the words in John chapter 15 so that we could have His joy and that His joy would remain. It would make sense then to examine John 15 to find exactly what he has said! It is in this chapter that we find *how to have the joy of the Lord*.

 John 15:4. Jesus said that if we are to bear fruit then we must _____ in Him.

 John 15:4. Jesus said that if we abide in Him we will bear _____.

Jesus spoke these words so his disciples could have fullness of Joy. The joy filled life is one that is spent abiding in Jesus Christ. In the next section we will learn what it means to Abide in Him and to thereby receive His joy.

Tuesday

The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy - Review

From Thursday

1. What are some differences between Joy and Happiness?
2. How can we define Joy? (second to last paragraph on pg 1)

From Friday

3. How can Joy help us to be soul-winners?
4. Besides reaching the lost, why is Joy important to us?

From Saturday

5. From whom does the Christian's joy come?
6. What is something that the unsaved would have a hard time explaining outside of God?

From Monday

7. What might a lack of joy in the life of a Christian indicate?
8. Name the four ingredients of Abiding.