

# “What Does the Bible Say About Joy?”

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"The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength" - Nehemiah 8:10 - Glacier National Park (Montana, USA) - Photo by Whitney V. Myers

***"Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."  
(Nehemiah 8:10)***

This lesson presents seven key Bible verses and principles about joy.

Bible verse quotations below are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless noted otherwise (Ref. 1).

## **1. The joy of the Lord is your strength**

*"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.'"*  
(Nehemiah 8:10)

The joy of the Lord is our refuge, our place of safety [literally, *a fortified*

*place*], and our strength (Ref. 2). The joy of the Lord as our source of strength can be relied upon when danger threatens (Ref. 2).

Note that joy is not the result of strength, but the source of strength.

## **2. Fullness of joy is found in the Lord's presence**

*"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)*

God's presence [God's *face*], is synonymous with favor, guidance, and life itself (Ref. 3). In our devotion to God, when we seek God's presence, we find fullness of joy that satisfies our soul (Ref. 4).

## **3. Joy is sustained by abiding in Christ and his word**

*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." (John 15:4)*

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

Jesus promised that his joy would be in us (believers in Christ) (John 15:11). Jesus makes our joy full [literally, *complete*] (Ref. 5). Jesus is the giver of joy. We receive his joy by believing in him, abiding in him, and obeying his word.

All of the New Testament mentions of the word "joy" in this lesson are translated from the same Greek word, *chara*. *Chara* means *cheerfulness* and *calm delight* (Ref. 6). Joy is Spirit-given delight that arises from the redemptive acts and abiding presence of God (Ref. 6).

## **4. Sorrow is turned into joy through the resurrection of Christ**

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." (John 16:20)*

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus told his disciples that they would be sorrowful, but that their sorrow would be turned into joy (John 16:20). Jesus' disciples would be sorrowful because of his coming death, but their sorrow would be turned to joy because of his resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us and our loved ones who die in Christ joy today. We know we will see one another again (John 16:21-22).

David expressed a similar thought about sorrow turning into joy for the Lord's "godly ones" (Psalm 30:4 NASB 1995):

"For His anger is but for a moment,  
His favor is for a lifetime;  
Weeping may last for the night,  
But a shout of joy comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5 NASB 1995)

## **5. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer**

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

A child of God passes the fruit test. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruit" (Matthew 7:16 NASB 1995, Ref. 7). A true child of God produces the fruit of the Spirit -- "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

## **6. Joy is found in doing the will of God, even when it is a cross**

*"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2)*

Jesus found joy in doing the will of his heavenly Father, specifically suffering and dying on a cross to save the world (John 3:17, Hebrews 12:2). In a similar way, as Jesus' followers, will find joy in serving God and in completing the assignments he gives us.

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## 7. Joy is an enduring presence, especially during trials

*"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." (James 1:2-3 NASB 1995)*

As believers in Christ, we should consider it joy when we encounter and go through trials because those trials strengthen our faith and produce endurance. Trials can become a cause for joy because in them we see God's hand to deliver us. Remembering how God helped us in the past will strengthen us and give us hope when new trials come.

**Prayer.** Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your joy that you give us each day. Thank you for making our joy complete. Thank you for being with us and strengthening us through our trials and giving us endurance. In your name we pray, Amen.

### Related Lessons

"The Meaning of God's Favor" - Psalm 30:5

"Characteristics of a Child of God - Part 1" - Matthew 7:16

"Bible Verses About the Cross" - Hebrews 12:1-2

### References

1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/English-Standard-Version-ESV-Bible/>
2. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4581.htm>
3. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6440.htm>
4. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7648.htm>
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