

"THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT"

http://executableoutlines.com/fs/fs_10.htm

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Joy

INTRODUCTION

1. Those who are influenced and directed by the Holy Spirit will produce "the fruit of the Spirit" in their lives – (Ga. 5:22-23)
 - a. We noted in our previous study that there is not a plurality of fruits, but one fruit
 - b. Yes, only one fruit that is made up of several inter-related graces or virtues, all of which will be manifested if one is truly walking in the Spirit
2. Prominent, of course, will be the virtue of "love", which we observed...
 - a. Was defined as "active good will", that which seeks the highest good of others
 - b. Is best exemplified by Jesus Christ, who through His example has taught us what love really is – (John 15:13; 1John 3:16)
 - c. Should be the "universal motive" for all that we do – (1Co 16:14)
3. As noted in (Ga. 5:22), the fruit of the Spirit also involves "joy"
 - a. It is interesting to note the relationship between the Holy Spirit and joy in several passages:
 - 1) The kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Spirit" – (Ro 14:17)
 - 2) The Thessalonians had received the word "with joy of the Holy Spirit" (1Th 1:6)
 - 3) And of course, our text in (Ga. 5:22)
 - b. Therefore, one who is led by the Spirit, and walking by the Spirit, will be someone filled with much joy in his or her life!

[But what is joy? How can Christians be filled with joy? As we seek to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, let's take a closer look at "joy" ...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF "JOY"

A. THE GREEK WORD IS "CHARA"...

1. Which Thayer defines as "joy, gladness"
 2. Vine adds "delight"
- By one count the word is used 60 times in the NT

B. THE VERB FORM OF "CHARA" IS "CHAIREIN"...

1. Which is most often translated "to rejoice"
2. It is used 72 times in the NT

C. CLOSELY RELATED IS THE WORD "CHARIS" ...

1. Which is the word most often translated as "grace"
2. Vine defines grace in the objective sense as "that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favourable regard"
3. Therefore grace is what produces joy!

D. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN "GRACE" AND "JOY"...

1. One's joy is directly proportional to the grace one has received, or at least to the perception of grace that one has received
 - a. Receive a small gift, and your joy might be minimal
 - b. Receive a large gift, and your joyous reaction is greater
2. When Christians' don't have much joy in their lives, something is wrong: "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere."
3. Here is one explanation why Christians may be joyless: "The reason why many poor souls have so little heat of joy in their hearts, is that they have so little light of Gospel knowledge in their mind. The further a soul stands from the light of truth, the further he must needs be from the heat of comfort."

E. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS ABIDING....

1. The Lord certainly does not want Christians to be joyless (John 15:11)
2. The joy He gives is "inexpressible and full of glory", able to sustain us in the worst of circumstances – (1Pe 1:6-8)
 - a. Unlike the "passing pleasures of sin" (He 11:25) which are fleeting
 - b. Even the good things in life eventually prove to be "vanity" (Ec. 2:10-11)
3. Therefore He has made it possible for the Christian to say with Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4)

[A failure to remember those things graciously given us which make for joy in our lives can explain why some Christians do not have the degree of "joy" (gladness, delight) they should have.

But Christians have every reason to be joyful. We just need to remember what it is that produces joy. Let's review just a few...]

II. SOURCES OF JOY FOR THE CHRISTIAN

A. JOY IS A CONSEQUENCE OF FAITH...

1. Joy comes from having "a confident trust" (faith) in God – (Phil.1:25)
 - a. Without faith in God and Christ, we cannot experience abiding joy
 - b. Why is faith essential to joy?
 - 1) It dispels the attitudes that prevent joy from occurring
 - 2) Such as "worry" (Mt 6:25-30), "doubt" and "fear"(Mt 14:27-31)
 2. Since joy is based upon faith, this emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in producing joy...
 - a. For faith comes from the Word of God –(Ro 10:17)
 - 1) The Word of God produces faith
 - 2) In turn faith produces joy – (. Ro 15:13)
 - b. The very teachings of Jesus are designed to give us joy (John 15:11; 17:13)
- Thus the need to read and study the Bible daily!

B. JOY IS ALSO THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE...

1. Obedience to the Word of God fosters joy in the hearts of the obedient
 - a. Notice the conversion of the Samaritans – (Acts 8:5-8)
 - b. Also the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch – (Acts 8:35-38)
 - c. And the conversion of the Thessalonians – (1Thess. 1:6)
 2. Conversely, disobedience dispels joy and produces fear! – (He 10:26-27)
- Could lack of joy be an indication of lack of obedience on your part?

C. JOY IS BASED UPON FORGIVENESS...

1. The guilt of sin is a major reason why many people lack joy
 - a. Awareness of such guilt causes stress, unhappiness, and worry
 - b. Even as Paul illustrated in describing the condition of one struggling with the problem of sin – (Ro 7:22-24)
2. But where there is forgiveness, there can be joy!

- a. Consider the 32nd Psalm of David...
 - 1) He introduces his theme by speaking of the "blessedness" (or joy) of one whose sins are forgiven - Ps 32:1-2
 - 2) He describes how the guilt of his sin affected him inwardly –(Ps 32:3-4)
 - 3) But at last he confessed his sin and was forgiven – (Ps 32:5)
 - 4) He describes the joy that the righteous (i.e., the forgiven) can experience (Ps 32:10-11)
- b. The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in (Ps 51:7-12)
- c. Today, those in Christ can enjoy forgiveness of sins and the joy that follows (Ro 5:1-2,10-11)

If you have not yet received the forgiveness found only in Christ, there is no way to experience the abiding joy that comes only "in the Lord"

D. JOY ALSO COMES FROM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP...

- 1. It is a joy just to "see" such fellowship
 - a. Paul experienced joy by witnessing love and fellowship in Philemon (phel.7)
 - b. He also found great joy in learning of the restoration of brethren (2Co 7:7)
- 2. How much more, the joy of "experiencing" such fellowship!
 - a. Paul rejoiced in the fellowship he had with the Philippians (Phil. 4:10)
 - b. John spoke of the joy that comes of Christian fellowship reunited (2John 12)

Are you developing and nurturing the kind of Christian fellowship that adds to our joy?

E. JOY COMES FROM CHRISTIAN SERVICE...

- 1. There is the joy of spreading the gospel
 - a. Barnabas rejoiced in the conversions at Antioch (Acts 11: 20-23)
 - b. The Christian Jews delighted to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles – (Acts 15:3)
- 2. There is great joy in seeing the spiritual progress of others
 - a. This was a frequent source of joy to Paul - Ro 16:19; Col 2:5; 1Th 3:6-9
 - b. John wrote that this was the highest form of joy - 3Jn 4
 - c. One reason this is true is that those whom we have brought to Christ...
 - 1) Will not only be a source of joy for us now
 - 2) But especially in the day of Christ! - cf. 1Th 2:19-20
- 3. Jesus also spoke of the "blessedness" (i.e., joy) of giving to others - Ac 20:35

All those who are willing to become involved in serving the Lord, whether it be through teaching or the giving of one's time, energy or money, will experience joy from such service!

CONCLUSION

1. The wonderful joy of the Lord is open to all who would receive it through such things as:

- a. Faith in Christ
- b. Obedience to His Will
- c. Forgiveness through His blood
- d. Fellowship with His disciples
- e. Service in His Kingdom

And it is the kind of joy that can sustain us through life, as Nehemiah told Israel:

"The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8:10)

2. Certainly those who are...

- a. Born of the Spirit
- b. Walking in the Spirit
- c. Being led by the Spirit

...will be involved in all these things, and as a consequence will bear the fruit of the Spirit which includes "joy"

3. Why not begin experiencing this joy today by...

- a. Obeying the gospel of Christ
- b. Receiving the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ
- c. Participate in the fellowship of Christian love as you work toward bringing others to salvation in Christ - cf. Ac 2:38-42

Joy is not happiness. Happiness to me is a momentary feeling. I felt happy when I had a good day or a good time with my family, etc. Joy is much more deep and abiding. You can have joy even in the darkest moments. I would say it is similar to peace. One commentary I read said, "Joy in the Christian life is in direct proportion as believers walk with the Lord."

Sometimes joy has to be a wilful commitment or choice. Lord, I'm choosing to rejoice in you, because of what you done. Joy is an act of praise. When we think of all the things

God has done for us, how can we not rejoice!! Praising God is the best antidote for depression and anxiety. When we recount our blessings we experience a renewing of our faith and trust in whom God is and what he has done.

One final verse to look up, Philippians 4:4.

If you notice this verse does not say sometimes or when you feel like it. Another commentary I read stated this, "The joy of Christian is not based on agreeable circumstances, instead it is based on their relationship to God." I can rejoice, because of who God is, not who I am or what is going on in my life.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/the-fruit-of-hope-joy>

1. What Is Christian Joy?

It is very difficult to put emotional experiences into words. But let me try to at least point in the right direction with three contrasts—three things that joy is not and three things that joy is.

Christian Joy Is Not an Act of Will-Power

First, Christian joy is not an act of will-power, but a spontaneous, emotional response of the heart. Christian joy has this in common with all joy, whether Christian or not.

When Peter speaks in [1 Peter 1:9](#) of rejoicing with "unutterable and exalted joy" in anticipation of our final salvation, he is not describing a decision; he is describing an explosion. You can decide to brush your teeth, or get an allergy shot; but you cannot, in the same way, decide to rejoice. You can decide to do things that may bring you joy—drive to the country, visit a friend, read a psalm—but whether joy actually happens is not in your own power, the way many other acts are. It may or it may not be there.

That is what I mean when I call it spontaneous. You can prepare for it—like lifting your sail on a still ocean. But you cannot make the wind blow. The Spirit blows where it wills, and joy is a fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)).

That is the first contrast: Christian joy is not an act of will-power. It is a spontaneous, emotional response of the heart.

Christian Joy Is Not Superficial and Flimsy

Second, Christian joy is not superficial and flimsy, but deep and firm.

This is why people like to distinguish it from happiness and pleasure. Happiness and pleasure seem too superficial and flimsy. Of course we must be very careful here. There is a superficial happiness and a superficial pleasure. But the Bible also speaks of "pleasures for evermore in God's right hand" ([Psalm 16:11](#)); and it says, "Happy the people whose God is the Lord!" ([Psalm 144:15](#)). So the words happiness and pleasure don't have to be superficial. They can mean the very same thing joy does.

But it is true to say that Christian joy is deep and firm rather than superficial and flimsy. The reason we know this is that the Bible describes Christian joy as flourishing right in the midst of pain and suffering. [Romans 5:3](#), "We rejoice in our sufferings." [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#), "You received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit." [2 Corinthians 8:2](#), "In a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality."

This is clearly a very peculiar emotion that not only endures but seems to even flourish in affliction. It is even more startling to read that Paul's joy could exist not merely alongside suffering but even in the midst of sorrow, which seems to be its opposite. In [2 Corinthians 6:10](#) he describes himself "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything."

This is what I am trying to get at when I say that Christian joy is not superficial and flimsy but deep and firm. I think I tasted a little bit of Paul's meaning in my own experience, for example, when my mother was killed in 1974. I wept more than I ever had, but it was not as those who have no hope ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)). Deep beneath the turbulence on the surface of my life there was a strong current of confidence and joy that all was well in the hands of a sovereign God.

That is the second contrast to help us understand Christian joy. First, it is not an act of will-power, but a spontaneous, emotional response of the heart. Second, it is not superficial and flimsy, but deep and firm.

Christian Joy Is Not Natural

Third, Christian joy is not natural but spiritual.

This distinguishes Christian joy from all other joys. When something is called spiritual in Scripture, it means that it comes from the Holy Spirit and has the character of the Holy Spirit. Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that something is "spiritual" simply because it has to do with the spirit, and that something is natural simply because it has to do with the body or with material things.

Pride is natural, but resides in the spirit of man. Envy is natural, but resides in the spirit of man. And so it is with jealousy and anger and strife and self-pity and resentment and bitterness and covetousness and hatred and selfishness. These all come from the inner spirit of a person, but they are not called spiritual in the Bible. They are called natural, because no special, supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit are needed to produce them. We produce these things by our own nature. So they are called natural.

What makes something spiritual is that it is produced under the special influences of the Spirit of God, and has the character of the Spirit of God. So when we say Christian joy is spiritual, not natural, we mean that it is produced by the Spirit of God and is the kind of joy that God has.

[Galatians 5:22](#) says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace . . ." [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#) says that the Christians "received the word in much affliction and with the joy of the Holy Spirit." [Romans 14:17](#) says that "the kingdom of God . . . is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." And Jesus on several occasions said that he wanted to have his joy fulfilled in his disciples ([John 15:11](#); [17:13](#)).

So there is plenty of biblical evidence that Christian joy is not the mere product of the human spirit in response to pleasant circumstances. It is the product, or fruit, of God's Spirit. And it is not just a human joy; it is the very joy of Christ fulfilled in us.

A Warning Against False Joy

One of the practical reasons that this is important to know is that it warns us against a false joy. There is a natural joy even in spiritual things which many mistake for a spiritual joy. For example, from the parable of the four soils Jesus gave this interpretation of the seed sown on rocky ground:

As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ([Matthew 13:20](#))

Here is a joy in the word of God that is not a spiritual joy and is no evidence that a true conversion has taken place. It is not the work of the indwelling Spirit of God. It does not have the character of Christ's joy. It vanishes like the dew when the hot sun of affliction rises in the sky.

Why does this joy vanish so easily? Why is it superficial and flimsy? Evidently because it was not a joy in God but merely in some of the comforts that God might give. When the afflictions and the persecutions and the hard times come, and the comforts disappear, so does the joy. Because it was not the fruit of the Spirit; it was not the joy of Christ that delights in God no matter what the external circumstances are.

In response to our first question, then, What is Christian joy?—

1. First, it is not an act of will-power, but a spontaneous, emotional response of the heart.
2. Second, it is not superficial and flimsy, but deep and firm.
3. Third, it is not natural, but spiritual.

Now in view of all this we turn to our second question:

2. Can This Joy Be Commanded?

Can God command us to rejoice if joy is not an act of will-power but a spontaneous emotional response of the heart and is not a product of natural resources but a fruit of the Holy Spirit? The answer that lies on the face of Scripture at many places is: Yes, he can, and he does.

Commands to Rejoice All Over the Bible

[Matthew 5:12](#), "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven." [1 Thessalonians 5:16](#), "Rejoice always!" [Philippians 4:4](#), "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice!" [1 Peter 4:13](#), "Rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings." And even though the word for rejoice here in [Romans 12:12](#) is literally a participle ("rejoicing in hope"—NASB, KJV), the meaning is clearly imperative: "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer"—these are clearly things we are obliged to do. This is even more clear in verse 15, where all the versions translate it as a command: "Rejoice with those who rejoice!"

So the answer is, Yes, God can and does command his people to rejoice. Even though joy is not controlled by our will-power, and even though it is a fruit of God's Spirit and beyond our natural resources, nevertheless we are commanded to have this experience!

Why Are We Commanded to Have Joy?

Why? Because we ought to have it—God is infinitely worthy of our delight. And because the only thing standing between the command of God to rejoice and our experience of that joy is a sinful heart—a heart that delights more in the things of the world than in God. And if we try to excuse our disobedience by saying, "I can't rejoice in God; I have a sinful heart," our words will not excuse us; they will condemn us.

In short, it is right for God to command his creatures to have a spontaneous, deep, spiritual delight in him, the same way it is right for God to demand that we be born again ([John 3:3](#)) and that we get a new heart ([Ezekiel 18:31](#)). Righteousness does not cease to be a duty just because we are wicked.``

And so we come to our last question:

3. How Can We Obey This Command?

And since the text says, "Rejoice in hope," we ask, "How does hope figure into our obedience to this command?" And since we have seen that Christian joy is a fruit of the Spirit, we must also ask, "How do the Holy Spirit and hope relate to each other in producing joy?"

There are two places in Romans where joy and hope and the Holy Spirit are all brought together so we can see how they relate to each other (5:2–5 and 15:13). We will only have time to look at one of them.

Joy, Hope, and the Holy Spirit

So let's consider [Romans 5:2–5](#).

Through him [i.e., Christ] we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3) More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5) and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

In verse 2 Paul says that he does the very thing that he commands in [Romans 12:12](#): he rejoices in hope, specifically, hope in the glory of God.

Then in verse 3 he says that he rejoices in his sufferings as well. But why? The answer is that it's just another way of rejoicing in hope. Follow his train of thought: the reason we rejoice in suffering is that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope! So what he is really rejoicing in when he rejoices in suffering is more hope. Hope is the great source of joy in Paul's life.

Matthew Henry put it like this:

The joy and peace of believers arise chiefly from their hopes. What is laid out upon them is but little, compared with what is laid up for them; therefore the more hope they have, the more joy and peace they have . . . Christians should desire and labor after an abundance of hope. (Commentary on [Romans 15:13](#))

But how does this hope and joy in [Romans 5:2-4](#) relate to the work of the Holy Spirit? This is what Paul tells us in verse 5: "And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us."

Verse 5 says that underneath our hope, giving it an unshakable foundation, is the love of God. And the work of the Holy Spirit is to pour this love into our hearts, to make us see it and grasp it and cherish it.

Now we can put the pieces together: first, there is the love of God which chooses us and calls us and justifies us and guarantees for us a share in the glory of God. Then, there is the work of the Holy Spirit that pours the love of God into our hearts so that we recognize it and cherish it. Then, out of this deep experience of the love of God grows an unshakable hope even in the midst of suffering. And finally, in this hope we rejoice.

How to Fight for Joy in Everyday Life

How then do we obey the commandment to rejoice? How do we fight for joy in the ups and downs of everyday life?

First, let us acknowledge that by nature we are sinners and helpless to become the kind of people who rejoice in the glory of God rather than our own glory.

Second, let us cry out to the God of hope that he would send his Holy Spirit and pour the love of God into our hearts.

Third, let us set our minds on the biblical expressions and evidences of God's love for repentant sinners. For example:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

"For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so, finally, when the love of God has filled us with hope in the glory of God, we rejoice in that hope, and again I say to you, REJOICE