

The Fruit of Joy

There's a strong cultural need to be happy. In fact, many of us find ourselves uncomfortable and unsure what to say or do when we interact with someone who isn't happy. But the reality is there are times it's just not possible to be happy; times when physical pain, emotional pain, sorrow, or injustice are insurmountable in our lives. Yet, the Bible challenges us to "rejoice in the Lord always." If there are times it's not possible to be happy, are there also times it's not possible to be joyful? Discover where true joy is found, what it looks like, and how Christians can experience this fruit of the Spirit in daily life, whether our circumstances are happy or not.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- How do you define joy? Describe how joy is similar to happiness or pleasure. How is it different?
- What does it mean to rejoice?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [The Fruit of Joy](#)

READ [1 Peter 1:3-9](#), [Galatians 5:22-23](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- In the opening segment, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee discuss how looking forward to God's kingdom provides us with a living hope and that hope for the future provides us joy in the present, a joy found in Jesus Christ that cannot be taken from us. How or when have you found this to be true? Describe a time when looking forward toward future hope gave you joy or helped you maintain joy in the present.
- In his book *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness*, Christopher J.H. Wright writes, "Self-pity is the great enemy of joy" (p. 53). What do you think led Wright to this conclusion? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Read [Hebrews 12:2](#). Then consider this reflection from author J.V. Fesko in his book *The fruit of the Spirit is...*: "Jesus was not clapping his hands as he giddily bore his cross. His suffering was, however, a time of joy for him. His joy was in knowing he was being obedient to his Father's will. I also suspect it was the knowledge that his suffering would produce life for his bride, the church, that gave him great joy" (p. 58). How does this observation about Jesus' experience help you understand Scott and Dave's remarks in segment 2 that joy is a second feeling, more refined than happiness; and that joy can be experienced even during times of grief or sadness? Where have you seen this reality in your own life experiences or the life experiences of others?

- In his reflections on the fruit of joy, Wright tells of a number of Christians he knows who have endured times of depression, yet testify to an “underlying assurance of truth...even when life is at its darkest.” Wright observes “...they can know joy as an *objective fact or truth*, even when they don’t have joyful emotional *feelings*” (p. 51). Have you ever “known” joy, even when you couldn’t feel it? How can recognizing joy as an objective fact or truth help us to keep the Bible’s command to “rejoice in the Lord” even when our circumstances keep us from feeling joyful?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[John 15:11](#), [Philippians 4:4-7](#), [Habakkuk 3:17-18](#), [Hebrews 12:2](#), [Psalm 16:11](#)

CONCLUSION

Dave concludes the episode by quoting [Psalm 16:11](#):

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence (in God’s presence) there is fullness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Using a concordance, find 3-4 additional Psalms that speak about joy. Describe the similarities you find between these Psalms. Then reflect, if you were to write your own Psalm, what would you include in your testimony of joy? If you are inclined, write it and consider with whom you might share it.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/the-fruit-of-joy>

Printed on March 14, 2025