

The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy (Galatians 5:22) – Teaching Notes

Please turn to Galatians 5:22 where we will be looking at the familiar words that I suspect are not as familiar to our experience as they should be, for most of us, if not all of us. “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy ...*” This evening we will be focusing our study on joy, joy from and in God and His Spirit.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote in *Spiritual Depression*, that what marks Christians today is they “too often seem to be perpetually in the doldrums and too often give the appearance of unhappiness and lack of freedom and absence of joy. There is no question at all but that this is the main reason why large numbers of people have ceased to be interested in Christianity.” Believing that Christian joy was one of the most potent factors in the spread of Christianity in the early centuries, Lloyd-Jones not only lays bare the causes that have robbed many Christians of spiritual vitality but also points the way to the cure that is found through the mind and spirit of Christ [from back cover or Eerdmans edition]

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., was a member of the U.S. Supreme Court for 30 years [called by some] “the greatest justice since John Marshall.” At one point in his life, Justice Holmes explained his choice of a career by saying: “I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers.” -- MBI Today In The Word, June, 1988, p. 13.

Other Quotes on Joy:

Matthew Henry defines joy as “cheerfulness in conversation with our friends, or rather a constant delight in God” (another defines it as “triumphant overflow of Christian gladness”) – do we have this? “Joy is the flag that flies over the castle of our hearts announcing that the king is in residence today.” “JOY IS A WINSOME MAGNET that draws people in because it is one thing they do not have.” Prov 15:3 “*a cheerful look brings joy to the heart*” (your visible joy can encourage others)

Many years ago when the great missionary Adoniram Judson was home on furlough, he passed through the city of Stonington, Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson’s arrival was struck by the man’s appearance. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher Henry Clay Trumbull. In a book of memoirs he penned a chapter entitled: “What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson.” That lighted countenance had changed his life. [Do you have that joy? Do you want it?]

I. The Context of Joy

Galatians 5:16–25 (NKJV)

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³ *gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.* ²⁴ *And those who are Christ's have crucified*
the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

a. Observe how Galatians begins in contrast to Paul's other epistles

- not every human experience is something to be joyful in or about (Paul isn't thankful or joyful for the heresy in the Galatian church, he condemns rather than commends)
- we're not to be happy *about* sin or error, but we are to have joy *in the Lord* even in the midst of suffering that may be due to sin or error (ours or others – more on this later)

b. Meditate on how Galatians 5:16 connects with v. 22-23 and v. 25

- vs. 22-23 show what it looks like to fulfill v. 16 and 25
- “walk by Spirit / keep in step with Spirit” is not mystical feelings so much as it is daily step-by-step choices to live by actions of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.

c. Compare v. 19 with v. 22 (“works” vs. “fruit”)

- What we do (works) vs. what God produces (fruit)

I read this week: Men have pursued joy in every avenue imaginable [every other place]

• Not in Pleasure — Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: “The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone.”

• Not in Money — Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: “I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.”

• Not in Position and Fame — Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: “Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret.”

• Not in Military Glory — Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, “There are no more worlds to conquer.”

• Where then is real joy found? (The Bible Friend, Turning Point, May, 1993)

Here's the words of one who found it, a man in the 3rd century writing these dying words to a friend:

‘It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not ... [their joy is because] They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians, and I am one of them.’

- Note the plural “works” vs. singular “fruit”
- “Fruit” is produced by a tree based on its nature and life within, but can also can and must be cultivated to bear fruit or much fruit (study this concept further in John 15)

Wiersbe: ‘A machine in a factory *works*, and turns out a product, but it could never manufacture fruit. Fruit must grow out of life, and, in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). When you think of “works” you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of “fruit” you think of beauty, quietness, the unfolding of life.’

d. Think of how love in v. 22 relates to joy and the other traits that follow

NET Bible Notes says v. 22 could be punctuated “love” followed by a colon (love: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). It is thus possible to read the eight characteristics following “love” as defining love.

Agape is the Greek word for love that most reflects personal choice. It refers not simply to pleasant emotions or good feelings but to willing, self-giving commitment to actions and attitudes of love. Its fitting that joy comes right after love in v. 22, because biblical joy is also similar, as we’ll see a little later.

e. Study also v. 13-14 and 1 Cor. 13 for parallel ideas:

love has joy in 1 Cor. 13, v. 6

love has peace in v. 5 (not easily provoked)

love is patience in v. 4

love is kindness in v. 4

love is goodness in v. 6 (rejoices not in evil)

love “believes” faithfully in v. 7 (same Greek root word *pistis* as Gal. 5:23)

love is gentle in v. 5 (not behaving rudely)

love is self-controlled in v. 4-5

II. The Commands for Joy

I don’t know if you realize how often the Bible uses the word joy or rejoicing, but it’s about 500x depending on translation (happy or happiness only about 10% as many times). The word “glad” is used another 150x and the word for supreme joy (“blessed”) appears a little less than 100x, so in total, related words are used nearly 800x in the Bible, including many commands.

Philippians 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Philippians 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

James 1:1b–2 (NKJV)

¹ James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. ² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

Psalms 32:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Psalms 68:3–4 (NKJV)

³ But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly. ⁴ Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him.

Psalms 100:2 (compare Deuteronomy 28:47 and following), etc.

Note: We’re not commanded to “be happy” (external emotion based on external happenings)

III. The Content of Joy

Of/from the Spirit (Gal 5:22; Acts 13:52; 1 Thessalonians 1:6)

Acts 13:52 (NKJV)

⁵² *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,*

Of/from the Father (James 1:17; Ps 16:11; Lk 15; Zeph. 3:17; Deut. 30:9; Isa. 62:5, 65:19)

Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Deuteronomy 30:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers,*

Isaiah 62:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.*

Isaiah 65:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.*

Of/from the Son (John 15:11, 17:13; Matt. 25:21, 23; Neh. 8:10)

John 15:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

John 17:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.*

In the Spirit (Romans 14:17)

In the Father (Romans 5:10-11)

In the Son (Romans 5:11; Philippians 4:4, 10, 1:18, 3:3 NKJV)

In what God has done in past salvation (Lk 2:10-11; Isa 61:10; many psalms)

In what God is doing in present suffering (Jas. 1:2-4; Rom. 5:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-8)

James 1:2-4 (NKJV)

² *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Romans 5:2–4 (NKJV)² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

1 Peter 1:6–8 (NKJV)⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

In what God will do in the future (some psalms, much of OT prophets)

IV. The Cultivation of Joy

1. Keep in mind that biblical joy is not mere human happiness or dependent on what's happening or changing feelings or circumstances; joy is experienced in the worst of circumstances and feelings (2 Cor 6:10, 7:4, 8:2; Mt 5:11-12; Acts 5:41; Heb 10:34)

2 Corinthians 6:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

2 Corinthians 7:4 (NKJV)

⁴ *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.*

2 Corinthians 8:2 (NKJV)

² *that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.*

Matthew 5:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Acts 5:41 (NKJV)

⁴¹ *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Hebrews 10:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ *for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.*

2. **Commit to rejoice in the Lord (Hab. 3:18: “I will,” not “I feel”) by the Lord (His strength: v. 19) despite unhappy feelings or unfavorable events (v. 17), resolve you will praise the Lord in joy (Ps 9:1-2) and “sing for joy” (33:1)**

Habakkuk 3:17–19 (NKJV)¹⁷ Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.¹⁹ The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet

Psalms 9:1–2 (NKJV)¹ I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.² I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Psalms 33:1 (NKJV)

¹ *Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful.*

3. Consume His Word (Jer. 15:16) daily, like your treasured food (Job 23:12) and rejoice anytime you hear and understand God's truths (Neh. 8:12b)

Jeremiah 15:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.*

Job 23:12 (NKJV)

¹² *I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.*

Nehemiah 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² *And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.*

4. Cry for eye-opening grace to see and find joy in His Word as you read it (Ps 119:18), making yourself happy in it, not forgetting it after reading it (v. 16), praying for God to revive us (85:6) and restore the joy of salvation if you've lost it (58:12) and to heal your broken spirit to enable gladness (v. 8), praying with joy for others (Phil. 1:4), asking all requests in the Lord's name / will so that our joy may be full as God answers (Jn 16:24)

5. Cultivate a joyful heart when you awake (Ps 59:16) and when you go to bed (149:5)

Psalm 59:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *But I will sing of Your power; Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble.*

Psalm 149:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.*

6. Confess your sins (Ps 32, 51) and keep your heart right and pure (97:11) and trusting the Lord (28:7) and continually humbled before the Lord (Isa 29:19)

Psalm 97:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Light is sown for the righteous, And gladness for the upright in heart.*

Psalm 28:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.*

Isaiah 29:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.*

7. Come to worship (Ps 43:3-4), not just for your sake but to sing to the LORD and serve others with gladness for His sake (100:1-4), to work for the joy of and encouragement of others (2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:24, Job 29:13, Heb. 10:24-25), to give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7, 1 Chr 29:9), and to have fellowship with God and His people (1 Jn 1:3-4, 2 Jn 12, Jn 15)

Psalm 43:3–4 (NKJV)

³ *Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle. ⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.*

Psalm 100:1–4 (NKJV)

¹ *Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! ² Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. ³ Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. ⁴ Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.*

2 Corinthians 1:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ *Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.*

Philippians 1:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ *Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*

Job 29:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*

1 John 1:3–4 (NKJV)

³ *that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.*

2 John 12 (NKJV)

¹² *Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.*

8. Consider Christ: His incarnation (Lk 1:14; 2:10), His death and resurrection (Mt 28:8), His ascension (Lk 24:51-53), His place in heaven right now (Heb. 12:2-3), His kingdom (Mt 13:44), His coming again (Rev 19:7, 1 Pet 4:13), and His constant presence you must acknowledge constantly (Ps 16:8-11, Phil. 4:4-9)

Luke 24:51–53 (NKJV)

⁵¹ *Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.*

Hebrews 12:2–3 (NKJV)

² *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

Matthew 13:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

Revelation 19:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”*

1 Peter 4:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

Psalm 16:8–11 (NKJV)

⁸ *I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. ¹⁰ For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ¹¹ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Philippians 4:4–9 (NKJV) ⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!* ⁵ *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

- 9. Celebrate the gospel: when it's proclaimed (Phil. 1:18), when sinners are saved (Lk 15), for the amazing reality that we're saved (Lk 10:20), and for all the astonishing and undeserved spiritual blessings we have by sovereign grace (Eph. 1:3-14)**

For further study: John Piper, *How to Fight for Joy*, and *Desiring God* (appendix excerpted below)

1. Realize that joy must be fought for relentlessly

2. Learn ... how to fight like a justified sinner (Micah 7:8-9)

*Micah 7:8 (ESV)*⁸ *Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.*

3. Realize that the battle is primarily a fight to see God for who He is (Ps 34:8)

4. Meditate on the Word day and night (Ps 1:2, 19:7-8, examples of Hudson Taylor, George Mueller)

5. Learn to preach to yourself rather than listen to yourself [feelings]; Ps 42:5, Martyn Lloyd-Jones

6. Spend time with God-saturated people who help you see God and fight the fight

7. Be patient in the night of God's seeming absence

8. Make a proper use of God's revelation in nature [enjoy and praise]; Ps 19:1, Mt 6:28-29

9. Read great books about God and biographies about great saints

10. Do the hard and loving thing for others – witness and mercy (Isa 58:10-11, Ps 67:1-2, 6-7)

*Isaiah 58:10–11 (ESV)*¹⁰ *if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. ¹¹ And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*