Transformed by Fire Series - The Fruit of Joy

Galatians 5:22-23

6/27/21

**The Fruit of Joy**

In a world full of tragedy and chaos, joy can be hard to find. What exactly is this positive, joyous character trait in the list of the fruit of the Spirit?

* Joy in the dictionary means a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.
* Joy has many synonyms, such as happiness, pleasure, gladness, and delight.
* The Greek word for joy is chara; which describes a feeling of inner gladness, delight, or rejoicing.

**Selfish happiness vs. Godly joy**

Which version of Joy are you experiencing today?

Selfish Joy is temporary. Often today people pursue happiness trying to find what will bring them joy.

* Is the Bible telling Christians that if what we do makes us happy and joyful, then it can’t be wrong?
  + For example, if we think sleeping around with many different sexual partners, cheat on our taxes to get bigger returns, or criticize others to make ourselves feel better, does that mean we should do those things to pursue Joy? No!
  + The Bible says: When what is right and fair is done, it is a joy for those who are right with God. But it fills the sinful with fear - Proverbs 21:15

This joy talked about as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is the positive and cheerful outlook of a person who has been called by God and understands how beneficial it is to follow God’s way of life. It’s godly joy.

* Breaking God’s law or selfishly seeking your own pleasures will never produce real, lasting joy.
* Real joy is an invaluable gift of God that radiates to others. There are so many Bible verses about joy that share that God simply wants to give us the gift of joy when we choose to trust in Him. Joy is a gift that we don't have to summon ourselves

We can have joy from God even when facing things that would naturally make us unhappy, such as trials. Tribulations, and temptations.

* + James 1:2 - 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

But thankfully the Bible promises that in the long run, joy, happiness, and pleasure will all align.

* Psalm 16:11: “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Where is this joy found? IN HIS PRESENCE!!! This is where we can find Godly Joy!

**What is Godly joy?**

* Godly Joy is the realization that God loves us and wants to give good things to His children—those who have repented, are living for Him, & have received His Holy Spirit.
* Godly Joy is the natural reaction to the work of God, whether promised or fulfilled.
* This fruit, Joy, is the delighted response of Christians to the fact that we have been given a precious truth, gift and understanding of a way of life that brings fulfillment—now and forever.

**How to demonstrate Godly Joy?**

There will be times of mourning in this life (deaths of loved ones or life changes), but even in those times of sorrow and weeping, the underlying joy of God’s plan for humanity (including the resurrection of loved ones) must reign in our hearts and actions. Easier said than done, right?

* *An example to follow* - Acts 16:20-28 Paul and Silas were just preaching and living their lives as Christians! They were arrested, beaten and imprisoned; yet during all this they never complained, or bickered. You don’t see that anywhere in scripture. Were they excited and joyful for getting beat…? No! But they knew that this too would pass, and they were doing what God wanted them to do…Live for Him joyfully in all things!

The foundation of their Joy was not based on their current condition, but on the condition in knowing that they were going to either die through this and be with Jesus in heaven, or Christ would get them through this to live another day to continue preaching for Him!

* *An example to avoid:* Christ mentions joy in His parable of the sower and the seed: *“But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles” (Matthew 13:20-21).*
  + This is only temporary joy, not real, lasting joy. The person in the stony places may have had sincere joy at the beginning, but he soon focused on trials and let that joy fade away.
  + Our joy, excitement and happiness in God must always be growing and expanding by staying close to Him and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

If we truly believed what God tells us in His Word, then we have plenty to rejoice about.

**Believing is KNOWING that God is with us no matter what the outcome of the situation. This equals REJOICEING (JOY)**

Joy self-examination questionnaire:

How are you doing in growing in the fruit of joy? Let’s find out, ask yourself these questions.

* Am I more of a positive or more of a negative person? (What examples from my life prove this?)
* Am I a complainer (do I criticize and tear down) or an encourager (do I build up)?
* Would others describe me as joyful or lacking joy? Why would they say that?
* Is my joy for the truth of God’s Word & God’s Kingdom greater than my joy for physical or material things?

Now truth be told, we face many things that can steal our joy: stressful jobs, illnesses, deaths of loved ones, economic strain, dangerous situations, daily annoyances & frustrations. So how do we demonstrate more joy in our lives? The answer is simple.

**We must change our thinking.**

It’s important to realize the process of living in Godly joy is a lifelong struggle with our minds, but completely livable through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Here are some ideas:

* When praying, list as many physical and spiritual blessings as you can think of. Strive to have a spirit of gratefulness and excitement about everything you’ve been given.
* Remind yourself to continually think about the benefits of God’s way vs. Satan’s way when you’re in a tough spot in life. Keeping with Gods way will help you get through things easier and better.
* Text, write or call others with encouraging phrases, Scripture quotes or even funny comments, knowing that joy in God’s blessings and truth is contagious with believers.
* Smile! Remind yourself that the devil speaks only lies, and Gods Word is True!

**The Spirit’s production of Joy**

The Spirit’s production of joy IF ALLOWED, can manifest in several different ways:

* *The joy of salvation:* Our greatest reason to be joyful is that God wants to save us and spend eternity with us. Nothing is better than this!
  + Luke 15:7: All heaven is joyful when a person accepts God's provision of salvation.
  + Acts 8:8: The people of Samaria were joyful as they heard the gospel and saw God's power in healing the sick.
  + Acts 13:52; 15:3: Jewish believers rejoiced when they heard of the work of the Holy Spirit in saving Gentiles.
* *The joy of deliverance:* When God sets us or someone free, rejoicing is in order.
  + 1 Samuel 2:1: Hannah was filled with joy at her deliverance from her enemies.
  + Acts 12:14: The servant girl was so overjoyed that God had rescued Peter from prison that she forgot to let Peter in the house.
* *The joy of spiritual maturity:* As the Holy Spirit works in us to bear more fruit, we become confident in God's promises & rejoice in our walk with Him & with other believers.
  + John 15:11: The fullness of joy comes to those who continue in the love of Christ and obey Him.
  + 2 Corinthians 1:24; 2:3; 7:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 3:9: Paul knew joy as the churches gave evidence of the Holy Spirit working among them.
  + Philippians 2:2: Groups of believers who unite in demonstrating the mind, love, and purpose of Christ bring joy to others.
  + Hebrews 10:34; 12:2; James 1:2-4: Believers, following the example of Jesus, endure persecution because of the promise of future joy,

* *The joy of God's presence:* The Holy Spirit draws us to God; in whose presence we can know true joy. Without the Holy Spirit, no one would seek God.
  + Psalm 16:11: “You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”
  + Matthew 2:10; Luke 1:14: Mary and the shepherds were joyful because Immanuel had been born.
  + Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:41: The women who went to Jesus' tomb and the disciples were overjoyed that He rose from the dead.

I mentioned earlier that the Greek word for joy is chara...Well it is closely related to charis, which means “grace” or “a gift.” So, chara is the normal response to charis—**We have joy because of God's grace**.

The next step in the progression is to allow our joy to become an action as we express it, and even exemplify joy that can be so great it is inexpressible

* 1 Peter 1:8 “*You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” (Indescribable, unspeakable joy)*

Closing:

Possessing godly joy is a choice just as possessing agape love is a choice. We choose whether to value God's presence, promises, and work in our lives or not. Want to know why you’re still living in defeat? Want to know why you’re not happy? Because you’ve made the wrong choice and are looking to the wrong thing to make you smile and give you joy and happiness.

Maybe your feel week today, feel depressed today, feel sad today.... Maybe you can’t change the circumstances you’re in today, then change what you can...**You’re thinking!!!**

Choose JOY!

How? - When you are bombarded with all the negative in this world, and the enemy is whispering “lies” in your ear bringing you down (which is his job by the way) we need to CHOOSE to consider & truly believe the amazing truth that Gods knows everything we go through, and He has our best interests at heart. We can be joyful all the time as we “can do ALL things through Christ which strengthens me! We can claim as Nehemiah does in Nehemiah 8:10 **- The joy of the LORD is my strength!**

**Prayer**

**Is the fruit of love & joy flowing from your heart?**

Starting today, we need to look with in our hearts and see if we are producing these 2 fruits.

* Maybe we need to receive the Agape Love from the Father today, so when filled, we’ll be able to overflow that love out to everyone who are hurting and seeking for the only thing that can heal and give hope!
* Maybe we need to receive the true joy from the Father today, so when filled, you’ll be able to overflow that joy out to everyone who are down and depressed and struggling to find a reason to even crack a smile or even continue through the day!

**Will you allow the Holy Spirit began to change you today with these Fruits?**

Closing scripture after prayer:

Romans 15:13 - *I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit*