

- If your joy is based on people and circumstances, you'll spend a lot of time being unhappy.
- This is a joy anyone can experience.
- You don't have to be saved or even spiritual to experience it.
- There is nothing wrong with this kind of joy: it's all a part of being human.

Lasting Joy

- Being saved doesn't guarantee you'll be happy in this life. Christians are often the unhappiest of people.
- Perhaps you're unhappy because you're (1) not confessing your sins, (2) not growing in the Word, (3) not applying the Word, (4) not claiming the promises, or (5) not accepting God's will for your life (1 Thess. 5:18).
- Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The Holy Spirit produces lasting joy in those He fills.
- This kind of joy is available only to believers. Unbelievers can't experience the joy of the Spirit because they're not indwelt by the Spirit.
- Lasting joy does not depend on people or circumstances.
- You can be happy when things are going right *and* when things are going wrong.
- This kind of joy exists in the midst of persecution, testing, and suffering.
- You may suffer and be happy at the same time:

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:6, NKJV).

...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 (Heb. 10:34).

- You can lose your money, success, job, health, friends, love life, and loved ones and still be happy.
- It is a supernatural joy—a joy you normally wouldn't have in adverse circumstances.
- It's a measuring stick to evaluate your Christian life: if you're happy most of the time you're in

- great shape; but if you're unhappy most of the time something's terribly wrong.
- It's internally maintained: lasting joy depends on knowledge, faith, and hope.
- It comes from claiming promises such as Romans 8:28.
- It comes from learning to be content (Phil. 4:11).
- It's always available: it is a joy you can have any-time you want for as long as you want.
- You'll be unhappy once in awhile because everyone succumbs to doubts, complaints, and worries.
- If you're unhappy, you're not claiming God's promises. You have your eyes on the problem. You're letting circumstances determine whether you're happy or not.
- This joy is something added, something in addition to temporary joy.
- Lasting joy doesn't replace but exists side by side with temporary joy.
- As a believer you can experience the whole realm of temporary joy—the joys of triumph, surprise, mastery, safety, reprieve, another's joy, extraordinary experience, anticipation, laughter, and love—and, in addition, be happy all the time no matter what circumstances you find yourself in.
- You can be happy whenever you wish. You can turn this joy on and off like a faucet.
- It's possible to be happy every moment of every day regardless of circumstances.



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JOY of the Spirit



You also became imitators of us
and of the Lord,
having received the word
in much tribulation
with the joy of the Holy Spirit.
~1 Thessalonians 1:6~

You can be happy whenever you wish. You can turn joy on and off like a faucet. It's possible to be happy every moment of every day regardless of circumstances. This kind of joy is available to you!

1. There are degrees of joy:

- a. "much joy" (Acts 8:8; Philemon 7),
- b. "great joy" (Matt. 2:10; 28:8; Luke 24:52; Acts 15:3),
- c. "abundance of joy" (2 Cor. 8:2),
- d. "filled with joy" (Acts 13:52),
- e. "fill you with all joy" (Rom. 15:13),
- f. "be filled with joy" (2 Tim. 1:4),
- g. "be made full" (John 3:29; 15:11; 16:24),
- h. "make my joy full" (Phil. 2:2),
- i. "joy inexpressible" (1 Peter 1:8),
- j. "no greater joy than this" (3 John 4).

2. Joy usually comes from desirable events (the etymology of *chara*, the Greek word for joy, suggests favorable circumstances bring joy to people):

- a. finding hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44),
- b. birth of a baby (Luke 1:14; John 16:21),
- c. miracles (reappearance of the star to the Magi) (Matt. 2:10),
- d. hearing and receiving the gospel (Matt. 13:20=Mark 4:16=Luke 8:13),
- e. hearing good news (an angel tells the women at the tomb Jesus is alive) (Matt. 28:8),
- f. seeing Jesus alive (Luke 24:41),
- g. exercising authority over demons (Luke 10:17),
- h. successful exorcisms and healings (Acts 8:8),
- i. receiving answers to prayers (John 16:24).

3. Joy co-exists with other emotions such as fear ("with fear and great joy," Matt. 28:8).

4. Joy is felt by

- a. angels in heaven when a sinner repents and becomes righteous (Luke 15:7, 10).
- b. the saints when they hear about people being saved (Acts 15:3).

5. Joy comes from

- a. God the Father (Rom. 15:13).
- b. hearing the Word of God (John 15:11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 1:12).
- c. knowing the promises of God (Heb. 10:34).
- d. faith—from believing the promises of God (Rom. 15:13; 1 Peter 1:8).
- e. anticipating future rewards (1 Thess. 2:19–20; Heb.

10:34; 12:2). The joy that comes from anticipating future rewards helps us to endure suffering (Heb. 12:2).

- f. unity and harmony in the local church (Phil. 2:2).
- g. fellowship with other Christians (Rom. 15:32; 2 Cor. 2:3; 7:13; Phil. 2:29; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:4).
- h. submissive sheep in the local church (Heb. 13:17).
- i. seeing your spiritual children loving one another and walking in the truth (Philemon 7; 3 John 4; cf. 1 John 1:4).

6. Joy is produced

- a. by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22; 1 Thess. 1:6).
- b. with the help of pastors and teachers ("we are co-workers of your joy" in 2 Cor. 1:24 means "we are working with you to bring you joy" BAG, 787–788; Phil. 1:25).

7. Joy accompanies the filling of the Spirit (Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17).

8. You may be continually filled with joy (Acts 13:52). The imperfect tense of the verb (*pleroo*) describes a prolonged joy—a joy that endures over a period of time.

9. Joy may be present in times of testing and suffering (2 Cor. 7:4; 8:2; James 1:2), e.g., the seizure of your property (Heb. 10:34).

10. Temporary joy comes and goes with changing circumstances whereas lasting joy rests firmly on unchanging circumstances.

- a. Lasting joy is based on irreversible historical facts and immutable promises (John 16:22).
- b. Lasting joy comes from placing your faith in biblical history and in God's unchanging promises. Unbelievers don't have this kind of joy because they don't have this kind of faith.
- c. Lasting joy is a fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces this joy by teaching you about Bible history (e.g., Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation), God's character (truthfulness and immutability), and God's promises.
- d. Lasting joy is always available because faith is always possible.
- e. Lasting joy is beyond the reach of the world. The

- only way it can be taken from you is by a force stronger than God (which is impossible).
- f. You can lose your joy, however, by losing your faith. Faith is the Achilles' heel of lasting joy. Satan sows seeds of doubt, attacking your faith, and, if successful, gets you to replace your joy with worry. Lasting joy is available anytime through faith and will last as long as your faith lasts.
- g. No one can take lasting joy from you if you keep believing God's word and promises (John 16:22).

11. Joy often (Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:11–12; 1 Thess. 3:9) but not always (Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7) accompanies prayer.

Jesus, for instance, "being in agony... was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). At this time, says the author of Hebrews, "He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb. 5:7). In view of this "always" does not modify "with joy" in Philippians 1:4.

12. Joy results in praising God (Luke 24:52).

COMPARISON OF TEMPORARY AND LASTING JOY

Temporary Joy

- Joy is an emotion.
- It comes and goes.
- No one is happy all the time.
- Joy is externally produced: it depends on people and circumstances.
- Joy has a cause or source: someone or something produces your joy.
- You are happy when things are going right and unhappy when things are going wrong.
- You can wait for exciting things to happen or artificially create entertaining situations (movies, concerts, parties).
- Take away the cause and you take away the joy.
- This kind of joy is temporary: it lasts only as long as the entertaining circumstance lasts.
- You can't manipulate your circumstances forever.
- People and circumstances will often disappoint you.