



Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

There is no end to the goodness of our God. When we spend time with Him, listening to His voice or reading His word, we will be filled with joy. Others will be drawn to the joy they see in us.



Day #1: Sing for Joy

Do you know the first verse in the Bible without looking it up? (If not, take a second to look it up.) Who existed in the beginning? God did! And what did He do? He created the heavens and the earth.

† The book of Job tells us that when God created the earth, "All of the angels shouted with **joy**." (Job 38:7) So, joy began in the beginning, with God.

Close your eyes and try to picture that scene. Before God created the heavens and the earth, He created the angels. But there was nothing else. Just darkness. But when God spoke His powerful words, there was light. Then He spoke again and the Earth took its shape. God gathered the oceans, and the mountains were formed. Waterfalls gushed down toward the fresh earth. Soon every type of plant and tree was reaching up toward the sky. And the next day, God hung the sun and moon in their places. Then great whales swam and eagles soared. Soon, young deer were leaping through the forest. It was a magnificent sight! The angels who were watching could not contain their excitement. When they caught their breath, they began to sing out with joy.

* What things did God create that bring you joy? Thank God for His power and creativity.

Lord, You make me glad by what You have done. I sing with joy about the works of Your hands. – Psalm 92:4

Day #2: Bedtime Song

† *The Lord takes delight in his people. He saves those who aren't proud. He makes them feel like kings. Let his faithful people be filled with joy because of that honor. Let them sing with joy even when they are lying in bed. – Psalm 149:4-5*

God delights in you and He has made a way for you to enter into His everlasting kingdom. That is a great honor that none of us deserve. We should sing out for joy over this incredible truth – even when we are lying in bed!

Shout to the Lord with joy, everyone on earth. – Psalm 100:1

* Tonight, while you are lying in bed, sing a praise song to God. You will sound like one of the angels we read about last night! You might know this song. (**Shout to the Lord**, Chris Tomlin)

My Jesus, My Savior, Lord, there is none like You;
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter,
Tower of refuge and strength;
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, Let us sing!
Power and majesty, praise to the King;
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.
I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You!

Day #3: Practice His Presence

If you could spend the day anywhere in the universe, where would it be? Would you choose Disney World, the Beach, a candy factory, the Moon? Let's read what the Psalm says about choosing where to spend one day:

† *A single day in (God's) courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked. – Psalm 84:10 NLT*

Day #3 continued:

This psalmist knew the secret to true joy. He knew that there is no place that compares to being in the presence of the one true God.

God is completely good and everything He created was good (Psalm 100:5, Genesis 1:31). Because God is the source of everything that's good, joy is found by spending time with God. Over and over in the Bible, we see that spending time with God fills us with joy (John 15:9-11, Isaiah 58:14).

(Lord,) You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you. You will give me endless pleasures at your right hand. – Psalm 16:11

Brother Lawrence, a wonderful Christian man who lived in the 1600s, spent his life seeking to live in the presence of God. After he died, his friends put together a book of his letters and notes. It is called *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Brother Lawrence once said that his soul was filled so full of joy and delight by living in God's presence "that he was forced to find ways to hide their appearing outwardly to others who may not understand." If he always looked on the outside the way he felt on the inside, people would continually ask him, "Why are you always smiling?!"

* Don't you want to live like Brother Lawrence? Speak with God continually; obey His voice at every turn. Joy is found in God's presence. There is no place else as sweet.

Day #4: Jailer's Joy

The book of Acts tells us about the amazing things that God's Spirit did after Jesus returned to heaven. You might recall the story of Paul and Silas being thrown in prison even though they had not done anything wrong (Acts 16:16-24). Even though going to jail is a sad thing, their hearts were still filled with joy because Jesus had saved them from their sins. Paul and Silas sat in a cold, dark jail cell. Even though there were chains on their wrists, there was joy in their heart! They let everyone know about the joy they had by singing out praise songs to God.

As they sang, the ground began to tremble. The jail began to rock! Suddenly their chains fell to the ground and the prison doors swung open. When the man in charge of guarding Paul and Silas saw what had happened, he became very afraid. He thought Paul and Silas had escaped and that he would be in big trouble. But Paul and Silas had not

Day #4 continued:

run away. They stayed in the jail so they could tell the jailer all about Jesus.



*The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them. **He and his whole family were filled with joy.** They had become believers in God. – Acts 16:34*

Paul and Silas were quick to tell the reason for their joy - even to the man who had held them in prison. Joy is contagious! The joy of knowing Jesus spread to the jailer and his family.



Do you show your joy, even when difficult things are happening to you? Is there anyone you know who needs to hear the good news about Jesus? Pray for the opportunity to share the reason for your joy.

Day #5: Joy Thru the Word



When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God of Heaven's Armies. - Jeremiah 15:16

The Bible is full of awesome stories and truths that are encouraging to all believers.

For example, God's word tells you how much God loves you. Zephaniah 3:17 says that God will take great delight in you, and that God sings over you!

Also, God's word tells you about the plans that God has for you. Jeremiah 29:11 tells you that God has great plans for you. He wants you to have success and good things for the years to come.

And, God's word tells you that God has everything in His control. He can take any situation - even crummy things that people do to you - and use them for good. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers, "You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives."

There is no end to the good news that is contained in God's word. Open it up and capture some joy for yourself!



Are you in the habit of reading God's word every day? If not, then commit to reading it every day for two weeks. Experts say that doing anything for 14 days will start to form a habit. Get into the habit of digging into God's joy-filled word!