



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

24 July 2026

Joy

Joy is the second part of the fruit the Holy Spirit produces in God's people that is listed in Galatians chapter 5. Almost everyone wants to have joy, or to be truly happy. But we know that true happiness can be elusive and short-lived. That is largely due to not understanding what true happiness is. It is often thought of as a feeling that comes from our situation, out of good relationships, accomplishments and relief from stresses and strains.



Christians often draw a clear distinction between happiness and joy. Happiness, it is said, comes from and depends on our circumstances, whereas joy does not. The problem with this is that the languages of the Old and New Testaments use the same words for happiness and joy. As well, as good as some of those descriptions may be, they are not always complete or that helpful.

What we need to see is the difference between true happiness or joy from God and the substitute from ourselves and our world.

True happiness is not something that just happens to us. Having a better job, more money in the bank, a nicer home, a better vehicle and good relationships can be very pleasurable. But those things are not, and cannot bring true happiness. The happy, glad feelings that brighten our days and lift our hearts because things are going well, are nice, beautiful and wonderful are great, but not God's true happiness. God's true happiness is not a fleeting feeling.

Looking at Scripture, consider this working description of true, Biblical happiness:

Joy, or true happiness, is God's gift of steadfast, delightful certainty.

Think about some of what the Bible tells us about joy.

- God is the source of joy. In our foundation passage of Galatians chapter 5 we are told that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is joy. King David closed Psalm 15 by telling God, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever." True happiness comes from God, not our circumstances.

- God does not keep it to Himself, He gives it to us, which we clearly see in Galatians chapter 5. Ecclesiastes chapter 2 tells us “For to a person who is good in [God’s] sight, He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy.”
- And God gives this great gift to all of His children. Jesus said, recorded in John chapter 15, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” In chapter 16 He said that our joy will be made full and no one is going to take it away from us (verses 22, 24).

It because of this that God can and does command us to be joyful. So the command that most of us know, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). Because of this James wrote at the beginning of his letter,

“Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

We face obstacles to experiencing, to growing in God’s joy.

- Sin that we have not dealt with, have not confessed and repented from can hinder our joy. As king David confessed his sin in Psalms 32 and 51, he then asked God, “restore to me the joy of Your salvation.”
- While our circumstances do not produce true joy and cannot not steal it, they can throw up challenges, hurdles to trusting God and experiencing His joy — problems in relationships, busy, hectic schedules, physical and emotional problems, to name a few.

Knowing and growing in God’s joy is a process. In our first week in this series we noted the importance of recognizing that God is the source and power for this fruit, that it requires obedient and disciplined action on our part, and that it is a life-long process.

How about a handful of specific action points?

- Keep short accounts with God — confess and turn from sin. See David’s example in Psalms 32 and 51.
- Abide in, stay close to Christ. Recall Jesus’s words in John chapter 15.
- Know, believe and trust God’s truth. God promises you His joy, trust Him.
- Accept God’s discipline. God’s discipline is part of making you more like Jesus.
- Keep the end in view. Review this paragraph in Peter’s first letter.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to

be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (3-9).

Allow the Holy Spirit to keep growing a bumper crop of joy in you.

Next week we will think about *Peace*.

Pastor Lyle