

The Fruit of the Spirit – Joy

An Introduction

What do you picture when you hear the word “joy”? Is it someone smiling and laughing? Possibly an event that brings joy, like a wedding or a birthday? To many of us, joy and happiness are words we use interchangeably to describe a temporary state of being. What are their differences?

Read Psalm 5:11, Hebrews 10:33-34, and James 1:2-3

Exploring the Passage

- 1) What are the different uses of joy in these passages?
- 2) Replace the words “for joy”, “joyfully”, and “joy” with “with happiness”, “happily”, and “happiness”. Does it change the meaning of the passages?
- 3) The authors of Hebrews and James talk about joy in the presence of suffering. Do you think this means that joy is an emotion based on external events?
- 4) Based on these passages, why do you think joy is from the Spirit of God? Or do you think anyone experiences it?

Charting the Course

- 1) Throughout the Bible, joy is written as a trait based upon God. The Psalmist sings for joy because he “takes refuge” in God. James has joy in his trials because it means he gets stronger in faith. Where are instances of joy in your life? Do you see it tied to God?
- 2) Read the James passage again. James says problems are a source of joy because problems strengthen his faith. Do you have joy even in problems?

But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.