

## **Fruit of the Spirit - JOY**

### **Introduction**

“Joy to the world the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King.” This relic is familiar to many people even some of them are not believers. This song is one of the all times hit during the Christmas season. Joy is good and let us take a close look on it.

Do you remember how you feel when you receive presents from other people? The feeling was good. But how long did that happiness last? Some may last less than a day and some less than a week depending on the “size” of the gift. What a short lived feeling! We need to receive more gifts in order to stay happy. But this kind worldly happiness last only for a little while and then gone. Joy of the Spirit on the other hand is long lasting. It’s a life time experience because it is rooted in the most High instead of the earthly things.

We all know joy is a good thing and want our life filled with joy. How then do we cultivate this spiritual fruit in our daily life? Here is some practical means.

### **Sharing**

**Rooted in Christ** – there is a saying “you are what is in you”. If we have Christ in us then the joy of the Spirit will be in us. The more we are like Christ the fuller the joy of the Spirit we will experience. If we root our joy in earthly things and people, we will be disappointed. The “joyous” feeling we obtain through earthly things and people will soon subside and we must look for more things or people to sustain our joyous feeling. Jesus told the Samaritan woman who came to draw water from Jacob’s well about His living water (Holy Spirit) in comparison with the earthly water from the well. *Jesus answered, “Those who drink this water [earthly water] will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water [the Holy Spirit] that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water [the Holy Spirit] that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life.”* (GNB Joh 4:13-14) Likewise, if we have the joy of the Holy Spirit we will not be thirsty again and do not need to refill our “joy” constantly.

When Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, he encouraged the people that the joy of the Lord is their strength! (Neh 8:10). Even Paul encouraged us in his epistle to the Thessalonians that we ought to rejoice always (1The 5:16)! Our joy should not be rooted around an event or circumstance but rather in God. Rooting our joy over an event or circumstance is temporal, but rooting our joy in the Lord gives us an eternal well-spring that never runs dry.

**Joy by Faith** – sometimes we encounter difficult situations that rob our joy away. In time of hardship, we feel depressed and even hopeless. Joy in this kind of situation is the last thing that comes across our mind. We sometime may even dwell in sad feeling and refuse to let go of it. I have this kind of experience with my younger daughter. Sometimes when she was sad she kept crying. No matter how we tried to comfort her, she just kept crying. She refused to be comforted. Joy was the last thing she wanted. This is not healthy and can be dangerous in the spiritual realm. If we dwell in earthly sorrows, we deny the power of God that can turn our mourning into dancing and our sorrow into joy. This is a sin. We must put our faith in God in time of hardship. It’s like a mother who gives birth to a baby. The child birth brings lots of pain. However, joy will fill the heart of the mother after the child is born. God allows us to go through hardship so that we can become better. *We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.* (GNB Rom 8:28). We need to have faith that God is control of every situation as we surrender it to Him. Only by surrendering to the Lord, we can find rest and hope because our God is a God of breakthroughs! If God has parted the Red Sea and provided for the needs of His people in the desert, He can give you the

breakthrough you need. When you know God can take of your difficulties, won't you be able to rejoice in the Lord?

There was once a story shared about a little boy whose sister had a severe brain problem which needed an operation that was very costly. He brought little piggy bank to the hospital and went to the nearest doctor who happened to be talking to a nurse. The little boy interrupted the doctor's conversation and told the doctor about his sister. He told the doctor he had faith that God can restore his sister but the family do not have the money but with all he had in that little piggy bank, he would try to save his sister. The doctor was a renowned brain surgeon who happened to be in town and hearing the little boy's plight; he took up the case and operated on the little boy's sister for free. All we need is to have faith that as we surrender to the Lord, we know it is in good hands.

**Praise God** – *I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the wonderful things you have done. I will sing with joy because of you. I will sing praise to you, Almighty God.* (GNB Psa 9:1-2) Joy and praising God are mentioned many times in various Psalms. The main reason the Psalmist praised God because of what God had done for them and Israel. However, it is not necessary for God to do something for us first then we give Him praises. Joy and praising God go hand in hand. There is power in praise. When we praise God, our hearts will be lifted up and He will give us the oil of joy for mourning (KJV Isa 61:1-3). When we praise God our joy will grow and this joy is of the Holy Spirit. In time of sorrow or hardship, give praise to God and He who is faithful and merciful will deliver us from the troubles and give us joy – the truth joy of the Spirit. When I feel down I praise God, streams of joy will fill my heart. The more I praise God the more the joy fills my heart. If you have ever tried to praise God when you feel sad or sorrow, you will understand what I mean. When you praise the Lord, you are turning to the Lord and He shall give you new source of strength. It is just like getting recharged!

When King Jehoshaphat was facing his multitude of enemies, he turned to the Lord and the Lord spoke through His prophet that the battle belongs to the Lord. King Jehoshaphat put his worship team in front of the army praising the Lord saying, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever." (2Ch 20:21) The Lord delivered his enemies into his hands!

### **Questions for group discussion**

1. What is the source of my joy?
2. Why should I give God praise when I am in deep sorrow?

### **Conclusion**

By faith we rejoice in the Lord. Overwhelming joy we will receive if we rejoice in the Lord. Sing praise to the Lord in time of sorrow and he who is faithful and merciful will give you the oil of joy for mourning. May God give us breakthrough as we rejoice in Him! Hallelujah!