

## **Fruit of the Spirit: study 3 JOY**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23*

The above is the verse we started with. Re-reading it, we remind ourselves that in fact all these qualities go together to make up the fruit of the Spirit and we shouldn't be producing any one of them without the others.

### ***Introduction***

How would you define joy? For example, ask yourself, how is joy different from happiness?

On what occasions would you say you have been truly joyful? What would bring you joy at the moment?

*To think about:* is it possible to be joyful when you are in a situation that isn't very happy? (We will come back to this one at the end of this study.)

### ***Study***

We look first at an Old Testament passage, from the end of David's reign. David had wanted to build a splendid house to contain the ark of the covenant, but through the prophet Nathan God had told him he was not the one to do it, instead his son would (see 2 Samuel 7). David, however, made plans for the temple and got together materials for it.

**Read 1 Chronicles 29:1–20** (don't worry about the numbers and amounts too much!)

In verse 9 it says that "the people" and "David the king" rejoiced. Why?

What was particularly good about the response of the leaders?

David praises God in verses 10–13. How does his response flow from what has just happened?

Have you ever been excited by other people's generosity – in money, time, energy? What prompted you to this response? How did you feel?

What other things can you find in verses 10–19 which might also have caused David to rejoice?

Think about what it might be about generosity that causes joy and write some thoughts here if you like...

Can you think of examples of joy in your life/church situation? Since this is a private study, you can write them here and you don't need to share them :-)

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The passage we've just looked at had a very practical reason for joy. We turn to the New Testament now to look at some other reasons to be joyful, and start with a passage in Luke's Gospel. Jesus sent out 72 to preach the kingdom and to heal. Now they return:

**Read Luke 10:17–24**

What made the 72 joyful (v.17)?

But why does Jesus tell them not to rejoice over that? What reason does he give? (v20).

*To think about.* Do you find it easier to rejoice over something intangible or something concrete? Why do you think this is so?

"At that time" Jesus himself is "full of joy" (vv21–22). How? Why? What do you think about the reason he praises God? Is it something you'd expect? Why then does it make Jesus rejoice?

**Read John 16:19–24.** Jesus and his disciples are in the upper room together just before his arrest and crucifixion.

What events are going to cause the disciples first to grieve and then to rejoice?

How does Jesus say their joy will be “complete”? How does this also apply to us as his disciples too?

How does Jesus’ resurrection secure lasting joy for us?

And finally, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul tells the Christians there to “rejoice in the Lord always”. And he repeats “I will say it again: rejoice!” (4:4). Here he doesn’t actually say why we should, but gives more than a clue in other letters.

**Read Romans 8:31–39**

Though this passage does not actually mention the word ‘joy’, how many reasons can you find for Christians to rejoice? List them here and spend time meditating on them.

So, to sum up:

- Why should we be full of joy? How can we be joyful in a world with so many problems?
- Is it possible to be joyful when you are in a situation that isn’t very happy?
- How can we show joy to the people around us?

To think about:

“Joy is the serious business of Heaven.” (C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*)