

What Does the Bible Say About Joy?

People spend their whole lives chasing happiness, and most of them never catch it for long. The reason is simple. Happiness rides on circumstances, and circumstances change. The Bible speaks of something deeper and steadier than happiness, a joy that does not rise and fall with the day's good or bad news. It comes from God, and it can be ours even in hard times. Let us see where it comes from and how to hold it.

Joy Comes From the Lord

Real joy is not found in things, and it cannot be bought. It is found in God. David said to Him, *"in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"* ([Psalm 16:11](#)). Nehemiah told a weeping people, *"the joy of the LORD is your strength"* ([Nehemiah 8:10](#)). The nearer a person walks to God, the deeper his joy, because the source of joy is God Himself, and He does not run dry.

The Joy of Salvation

The greatest joy a person can know is the joy of being right with God. When David had sinned, what he begged for was not comfort or relief but this: *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"* ([Psalm 51:12](#)). When the Ethiopian obeyed the gospel, *"he went on his way rejoicing"* ([Acts 8:39](#)). When the jailer at Philippi was baptized, he *"rejoiced, believing in God with all his house"* ([Acts 16:34](#)). Nothing else brings joy like forgiveness, and nothing steals it like unforgiven sin.

Joy Even in Trials

Here is where Bible joy parts ways with mere happiness. It can stand in trouble. James wrote, *"count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"* ([James 1:2](#)), because trials tested and passed make us stronger. Peter told suffering Christians they could *"rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"* ([1 Peter 1:8](#)) even while in heaviness. The apostles, beaten for preaching, left *"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name"* ([Acts 5:41](#)). A joy that survives suffering is plainly not built on circumstances.

Joy Shared With Others

Joy is not meant to be hoarded alone. The Bible ties it to other people, and especially to their souls. Jesus said there is *"joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"* ([Luke 15:10](#)), and the Christian who has any of heaven's heart in him will feel that same joy when a lost person comes home. Paul found deep joy in the people he had won and taught, calling one congregation *"my joy and crown"* ([Philippians 4:1](#)), and writing to another, *"ye are our glory and joy"* ([1 Thessalonians 2:20](#)). Some of the richest joy a person will ever taste comes not from anything done for himself, but from seeing others saved and growing in the Lord.

Rejoice in the Lord Always

This is why Paul could give a command that sounds impossible: *"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice"* ([Philippians 4:4](#)). Always. And he wrote it from a prison cell. The secret is in two words, in the Lord. The object of the joy is not our health, our bank account, or our comfort, all of which can be taken away. The object is the Lord, who never changes, so the joy fixed on Him need never fail.

Full Joy in Christ

Jesus wanted His people full of joy, not scraping by on the leftovers of the world. He said, *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"* ([John 15:11](#)). The life in His kingdom is meant to be marked by it, for *"the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* ([Romans 14:17](#)). So stop trying to squeeze lasting joy out of things that fade. Get right with God, walk close to Him, and let your joy rest where it cannot be shaken.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.