

ELUSIVENESS OF JOY



We are told to be happy all the time.

What does it mean to be happy?

Can we just be happy on command?

HAPPINESS VS. JOY

CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF HAPPINESS AND JOY ARE NOT THE SAME THING.

Ways they are similar:

- bring a smile to your face,
- cause laughter
- makes your heart feel lighter

What other similarities are there?

Ways they are different:

- happiness is based on circumstance, joy is based on God
- happiness comes from within, joy comes from God
- happiness comes from success after trusting ourselves, joy comes from trusting God

What other differences are there?

WHY IS JOY ELUSIVE?

- We think of it as happiness.
- We let our circumstances dictate our emotional state.
- We fail to see God in the midst of what we are facing.
- We fail to trust God when circumstances are difficult or seemingly impossible.
- We do not see God as in control so we try to control things ourselves.
- We think we have control over joy, and try to create it for ourselves.
- Our circumstances overwhelm us and instead of reaching out to God we just try to survive it.
- We don't trust God to handle it because we think He has failed us in the past.
- Allow our focus to wander from God to other things.
- We don't believe we are worthy of it.

What are some other reasons why joy may evade us at times?

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. *Psalm 1:1-3*

THE PSALMS ARE FILLED WITH DECLARATIONS THAT JOY CAN BE FOUND IN GOD ALONE

- Psalm 2:12
- Psalm 4:7
- Psalm 5:11
- Psalm 9:2
- Psalm 14:7
- Psalm 16:11
- Psalm 19:8
- Psalm 20:5
- Psalm 21:1,6
- Psalm 22:26
- Psalm 27:6
- Psalm 28:7
- Psalm 30:5,11
- Psalm 32:1,2,11
- Psalm 33:1,3,12
- Psalm 34:5,8
- Psalm 35:27
- Psalm 40:4,8,16
- Psalm 41:1
- Psalm 42:4
- Psalm 43:4
- Psalm 45:7,15
- Psalm 46:4
- Psalm 47:1
- Psalm 51:8,12,14
- Psalm 53:6
- Psalm 59:16
- Psalm 60:6
- Psalm 63:5,7
- Psalm 65:4,8,12,13
- Psalm 66:1
- Psalm 67:4
- Psalm 68:3,6
- Psalm 70:4
- Psalm 71:23
- Psalm 77:6
- Psalm 84:2,4,5,12
- Psalm 89:15
- Psalm 90:14
- Psalm 92:4
- Psalm 94:12
- Psalm 95:1
- Psalm 96:12
- Psalm 97:11
- Psalm 98:4,6,8
- and more!

HOW DO WE GAIN JOY BASED ON THESE PSALMS?

- Submit to God
- Take refuge in God
- Trusting God to keep you safe
- Resting in God's protection
- Being thankful for the marvelous things God does for us
- Following God's direction
- Focusing on God's commands
- Victories brought to us through God
- Resting in God's strength
- Praising God
- Salvation
- God's favour
- God's blessings
- God's provision
- God's comfort
- Being God's chosen and living as such
- God's help
- God's defense
- God's peace
- Doing God's will
- Searching for God
- God's rescue in times of trouble
- Trusting God completely

What are some other ways we can gain joy?

TRUSTING GOD COMPLETELY BRINGS JOY TO US

How much do you trust God? What do you trust Him with?

HOW HAS GOD EARNED YOUR TRUST?

- Through salvation
- Having a plan for your life
- Always being there for you
- Always loving you
- Creating you
- Giving you a purpose and a destiny
- Leading and guiding you
- Giving you peace in the midst of trouble
- Providing comfort when you mourn
- Giving us the Bible so you could know Him
- All of the times He has come through for you
- unchanging
- trustworthy
- ultimate sacrifice
- patient & wise
- truth
- all knowing
- all powerful
- protector
- provider
- never gives up
- always in control

What has God done in your life to gain your trust?

What characteristics about God make it easier for you to trust Him?

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! *Galatians 5:22-23*

Activation

TRUSTING GOD

If trusting God completely is the key to living every day with joy, how do we move from self-reliance to trusting God with everything?

First, make a list all of the times He has come through for you before?

Second, recognize God is far more capable of handling the things we face than we are. Make a list of ways we fall short of what God can do.

Thirdly, make a list of things that hold you back from trusting Him completely.

Lastly, take one thing from your list of things that hold you back. What will you do to overcome that obstacle? How will you implement this change in a practical way?

Keep this list and as you go through this month continue to tackle obstacles until you find the joy that has been missing.

3 Keys to Remember

- 01 HAPPINESS IS FOUND IN GOOD CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEREAS JOY IS FOUND IN GOD, DESPITE OUR CIRCUMSTANCES.
- 02 GOD IS THE GIVER OF JOY. TO EXPERIENCE TRUE JOY WE NEED TO SEEK GOD IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.
- 03 TRUSTING GOD COMPLETELY WILL HELP US TO GO TO HIM FIRST, AND ALLOW HIM TO FILL US WITH HIS JOY!

"I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for joy."
-C. S. Lewis