

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns, Mrs. LeeAnn Wiser.

Out of Town: Mr. Nick Law (Sunday Morning - North Valdosta)

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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The Fruit of the Spirit - Joy

By Derek Long

Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." Joy is the product of one living a life guided by the Spirit instead of living for the flesh. We live in a world which often identifies engaging in various works of the flesh as the path to joy. God's word gives us the accurate view of sin and helps us to avoid the suffering which results from sin and experience the joy of walking in the Spirit.

Many verses throughout the Bible speak of God's desire for us to be people filled with joy. Jesus told the disciples, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). John wrote to various Christians and wanted their joy to be full (1 John 1:4; 2 John 12). Perhaps a very famous statement about joy is Paul's statement in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" A Christian's life is not to simply have occasional moments of joy but is to be one of continual joy. Sadly many in the world are looking for lasting joy but fail to look in the right place to find true and lasting joy.

How can the Christian's life be filled with joy? What are some things a Christian should rejoice in? Let's examine why joy is listed as part of the fruit of the Spirit.

A Christian is able to enjoy the wholesome pleasures of life without any of the consequences brought about by sin. Ecclesiastes 9:9 says, "Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun." A person who walks in the Spirit will avoid the grief brought about by fornication, adultery, and divorce. Spiritual people get to experience the joy of being joined with one other person as husband and wife till death do us part (Genesis 2:24). Joy is found in following God's plan for marriage instead of the substitutes offered by the world.

A Christian will have suffering and hardship in life. In fact, he will face persecution specifically for living for Christ (2 Timothy 3:12). How can a person who faces persecution and suffering be filled with joy? The Christian has to remember the great reward which lays ahead of them. Jesus said, "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets" (Luke 6:22-23). We need to count it an honor and privilege to be able to suffer for Christ and follow in the footsteps of the One who suffered so much on our behalf (Acts 5:41-42). 1 Peter is written to Christians facing persecution for their faith in Christ. The book begins by reminding them of the "living hope" they have (1 Peter 1:3). It reminds them of their, "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that does not fade

away" (1 Peter 1:4). Because they had such a hope before them they were able to "rejoice with joy inexpressible" looking forward to "receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8-9). Joy can be found in the most unpleasant of situations by keeping your mind focused on the goal ahead.

A Christian knows whatever happens in life God is able to use it to cause "all things work together for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Bad things may occur in the life of a Christian. The Christian remembers bad situations, if handled correctly, can actually result in spiritual good.

A Christian has fellow believers who he can find joy in. Paul often expressed the joy he had in other Christians (1 Thessalonians 2:20; etc.). John wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). We can rejoice in the fact we are not alone. We can remember others are in the race with us and experiencing similar sufferings.

The goal of the Christian is to "Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21, 23). We want to experience heaven which will be a place filled with joy beyond what we can even imagine. Revelation 21:4 says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." The only way to experience eternal joy is by living by the Spirit.

Are you bearing the fruit of the Spirit? Is your life filled with joy? If not, why not make the needed changes?