

2: JOY—THE STEADY STRENGTH OF A SPIRIT-LED MAN

By John
In Character, Discipline, Faith

5 Min Read



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Fruit of the Spirit Pursuit: Becoming a Man Led by the Spirit

OPENING THOUGHT

The world tells men joy is a byproduct of achievement. Climb faster. Be stronger. Earn more, then you'll be happy. That form of joy is momentary. One misstep, one weakness, one layoff, and a man's world comes crashing down. The world says joy is pleasure. "If it feels good, do it." It also says, "Look for comfort, enjoyment, entertainment—the high is all that matters." But these pleasures fade fast, leaving a man empty, disappointed, wanting more to regain the feeling. The world says, Joy means having no problems." Men are taught to chase control—fix things, manage things, minimize pain. The world tells men, "You're in charge of your own happiness—it's within your grasp, reach out, take hold."

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God's message about joy is much different. True joy comes from your identity in Christ, not achievement. Joy isn't found in what you own, pursue, or achieve; it's found in *who* you're connected to. James 1:2 tells us, "Consider it all joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials." Joy cannot be manufactured, it comes from abiding in Christ. Nehemiah 8:10 tells us, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Joy isn't weakness—it's strength under fire. It's what keeps a man steady when everything around him starts to shake.

The world tells men joy is something they can buy, earn, or fake. Jesus tells them it's something they receive, grow in, and live from.

SCRIPTURE

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
—Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

Paul penned these words during his darkest days, in a Roman prison, chained to guards. The Roman army had perfected the art of discomfort and misery. Their prisons were dark, damp, ratholes—no windows, no beds, no sanitation. Paul says, "rejoice" once and then repeats the word for emphasis. He wasn't rejoicing because things looked like they were about to get better; he was rejoicing because God was close. He was rejoicing in his security, not his situation.

APPLICATION

Spirit-led joy is the quiet strength of a man who refuses to let circumstances dictate his faith. It's having the attitude of Christ, even when your feelings tell you otherwise. So, what does Paul's advice on joy look like when it's put into practice?

The Spirit-led man doesn't lose his cool when the job opportunity falls through, the car breaks down, or things don't go his way. He doesn't let disappointment control his attitude. He reminds himself that God is still in control. He just needs to lean into his relationship with his Creator.

The Spirit-led man focuses on gratitude, not grumbling. (*I wish I could do that when behind the wheel of my car in traffic.*) Gratitude is being grateful for what a person has, instead of wishing they had what others have. Joy is a sign of contentment. 2 Corinthians 12:12 tells us, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Joy in Christ brings strength to endure the tough times.

The Spirit-led person focuses on worship rather than worry. Paul and Peter sang hymns while in prison. Worship turns our hearts towards God. The practice reminds us Who's in control. You don't worship to feel better; you worship because you know Who's worthy. Who deserves our attention.

The Spirit-led man shows kindness even when hurting. He shows up to serve when tired. The Spirit-led man shows strength, not attitude. We're not talking about pretending, but honest expression.

The world tells men joy comes from control — more money, more recognition, more success.

Spirit-led joy says, *"I already have enough, because I have Christ."*

Spirit-led joy is rooted in surrender. It's what happens when you stop trying to script every outcome and start trusting God's timing.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE: REJOICE ANYWAY

Joy isn't something you wait to feel—it's something you decide to practice. Paul didn't say, "Rejoice when it gets better." He said, "Rejoice always." That means right now, right where you are, before the outcome changes, before the weight lifts, before the prayer is answered.

Think of one place in your life that currently feels joyless—a relationship, an activity, a problem that won't go away—and invite God into it. Don't ask Him to fix it. Ask Him to help you find *Him* in it. That's where joy begins—not when life changes, but when your focus does.

Then pray this:

"Lord, help me to understand my joy comes from You and from the things of this world. stop chasing happiness and start living with joy. Help me to hold onto this thought even when things look like they're out of control or falling apart. Teach me to find my joy in You. Amen."

FINAL THOUGHT

The world says joy is found in what you achieve. The Spirit says it's found in Who you abide with. Don't look to this world for your joy. It doesn't come just because the circumstances improve. When a man shifts his focus from what's happening around him to Who's at work within him, that's when real joy begins.

This week's step: Think about the things that used to bring you joy. Ask yourself if they still do—and if not, what changed? Maybe your joy faded because your focus shifted. Write this down somewhere you'll see it every day: "My joy doesn't depend on what I have. It depends on Who has me."

Read it until it becomes truth. Then live like it's real.

Greek Word Meanings for Each Fruit.

SNAG THIS PRINT-FRIENDLY VERSION FOR YOUR NEXT MEN'S BREAKFAST OR BIBLE STUDY.

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