

Things you cannot afford to lose – Joy – Part 1

There are many things we possess that the Bible says we should hold on to. Things we cannot afford to lose and qualities that must be maintained because they have a great reward. One such thing is **confidence**. Hebrews 10:35 says, **“So do not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded.”** Another quality you need to hold on to at all cost is **joy**. Proverbs 10:28 says, **“The hope of the righteous is JOY.”**

Nehemiah 8:10 declares, **“This day is sacred to our Lord. Don’t be sad, for the JOY of the Lord is your strength.”** Ecclesiastes 8:15 says, **“So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then JOY will accompany him in his work all the days of his life.”**

So what exactly is JOY? Joy is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. But joy is also vocal. The phrase “shout for joy” appears 18 times in the Bible; and the phrase “sounds of joy” 4 times. So, if you are truly joyful you will somehow articulate your sense of great pleasure and happiness. And especially if you are happy in God! Isaiah 24:14 says, **“They raise their voices, they shout for joy; and they applaud the Lord’s majesty.”** When was the last time you raised your voice and shouted for joy? When was the last time you applauded God’s majesty?

Psalms 68:3 states, **“May the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.”** Talking of salvation for the gentiles, in Isaiah 56:6-7, the Lord declares, **“Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants... Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house.”**

God has gathered you into His fold and you have been made **joyful** - this is a quality that God has given you! Being “joyful in His house” is a true expression of what God has made you to be. But this characteristic isn’t meant for church life alone, the apostle Paul said, **“I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our misfortunes”** (2 Corinthians 7:4).

It’s often so easy to be joyful when in the presence of God, because joy and *God’s presence* are directly related. However, the acid test of true Christian character is whether you can hang on to your joy in the midst of suffering, heartbreak or misfortune. Philippians 4:4 says, **“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice!”** To rejoice is to “show great pleasure,” or “to be exceedingly happy.” You are expected to be exceedingly happy in God - always and everywhere! This is because, in Him you live and move and have your being. In fact, this is the true “state” you inhabit. You live in the joy of the Lord and the joy of the Lord lives in you. You move in the joy of the Lord and the joy of the Lord moves in you. Joy should therefore be as natural to you as breathing.

Remember Nehemiah 8:10? **“...Be not grieved and depressed, for the joy of the Lord is your strength and stronghold”** [Amp]. But Psalm 45:7 and Hebrews 1:9 both reveal another aspect of the supernatural strength that manifests in joy. **“Therefore God, Your God has set You above Your companions by anointing You with the oil of joy more than Your companions.”** Notice, there is an *anointing* which comes from the Father that is specifically an anointing of *joy*. Consequently, inside of you right now is a

special kind of oil that produces a “glow” – a measure of joy - through which you can receive supernatural strength.

You possess a divine substance that makes you strong a strength that will act as a fortress in times of trouble.

JOY, in one form or another, is mentioned over 230 times in the Bible, and it's also related to a spiritual *glow*. This “glow” should be evident in every believer's life - in spite of adverse or negative circumstances. Some of you may be feeling that the flame in you has been obscured by hardship. But your hope for a secure future (*the prospect of the righteous*) is simply *joy*! And notice, this special kind of *joy* is *inexpressible* or *unspeakable* because it is not your own joy but the very joy which abides in Jesus Himself. It is the state in which you live, and move and have your being!

Being joyful is your antidote against worry, stress, grief and depression. And it effectively and sufficiently equips you with enough strength to act as an impregnable fortress in times of trouble. Jesus said, in John 15:11, that His joy would be perfected in you.

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”

Your joy is the perfect and exact representation of Christ's joy. Therefore, it is full (complete) – never lacking, never wanting!

Furthermore, Christ's joy is totally fulfilled in you and me. John 17:13, ***“But now I come to You and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”*** Jesus is explaining why He was praying this way, in the presence of His disciples. It was as if He was saying to them, *“These are intercessions that I shall never cease to make in heaven before My Father. But for your sakes I make them here and now, in the world, in your hearing, so you may distinctly understand how very concerned I am about your welfare and well-being. Even more so, that you may learn to increase in character and become absolute partakers of My divine JOY – My divine nature and strength.”*

God the Father has made provision for all of you to be vessels of honour - full to overflowing with the oil of joy; oil that should permeate every aspect of your existence. Even in the midst of trials, you have the ability to confidently display a perfect measure of His joy. Therefore, you must choose to remain a full reservoir (at all times and in every circumstance), awash with the life, strength and nature of God.

Remember, JOY is a ‘state’ you choose to abide in. So don't loose it! In every circumstance – hold on to it!