

Day 1

Fruit of Joy

“But the fruit of the Spirit is joy...” Galatians 5:22a

Joy is the juice that flows from the fruit of the Spirit. It is tasty, delightful and delicious. Joy from Jesus gives strength for the journey, endurance to obey and enjoyment to relationships. It offers hope for the future, optimism in the present and it reflects on pleasant memories from the past. Spirit-filled joy is a faith-filled attitude that is contagious. It converts frowns to smiles, cranks to encouragers and inertia to energy.

Joy gives fuel to our faith and it allows us to fuel the faith of others. It lights up a room with its genuine gladness and delights to hear another’s heart. Indeed, our countenance stays soft and kind when joy, like emotional lotion, has been applied to our face by the Spirit. Just as sunblock protects us from overexposure to harmful rays of light, so joy shields our soul from the lies of defeat and depression. Joy in Jesus generates gladness.

“Worship the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.” Psalm 100:2

We worship the Lord with gladness when we reflect on the gift of His son Jesus. How can we not explode with joy when we celebrate our eternal salvation in Christ? Praise to God releases our soul to lift up and proclaim joyful songs to our Great Shepherd, our Great Savior and our Great Spirit—the Godhead, three in one. Gladness in God can’t help but give Him glory. We are recipients of blessings that transcend our temporary trials.

Therefore, be a joy giver—not a joy killer. Joy givers smile—joy killers scowl. Joy givers build up—joy killers tear down. Joy givers laugh out loud—joy killers sneer inside. Joy givers see opportunities—joy killers see obstacles. Thus, be an agent of joy on behalf of Jesus. Perhaps you take yourself less seriously and the Lord more seriously. Laugh at yourself, sing in the Spirit and extend encouragement. A smiling soul molds the mouth.

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:8-9

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I be a conduit of Christ’s joy to those I encounter.

Related Readings: [Nehemiah 8:10](#); [Psalm 19:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#); [2:19](#); [Philemon 1:7](#)

Day 2

Peace on Earth

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Luke 2:14
NKJV

Peace on earth begins with peace in the hearts of people. Outward peace is the product of inward peace. Once a soul has experienced peace with God there is a serenity that seeps into human relationships and calms the rough waters of conflict. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand” (Romans 5:1-2a).

It is a grace based belief system that allows citizens and countries to get together and accept one another’s differences. Without conversations of grace, there is no context for peace. Indeed, nations that believe “might is right”, with whom forgiveness is a foreign language, will remain restless with no peace in sight. However men, women, children and governments who embrace reconciliation will experience an incomprehensible peace.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). Jesus came to earth first and foremost as a peace envoy on behalf of Almighty God. Do you have peace in your heart this Christmas season? Or is there restlessness in your soul that needs the comfort of Christ’s peace? The peace of God is your best prescription for insomnia. Peace brings deep abiding sleep.

Does this mean that we can experience 100% peace on earth? No, because the truth is divisive and not everyone believes the truth. So while Jesus is the “Prince of Peace”, listen to His challenging words, “Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three” (Luke 12:51-52).

So what is the role of Christians in promoting peace on earth and good will toward men? Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Followers of the Lord know grace best governs relationships, families, cities and countries. It is God’s grace that allows you to influence the process of peace. So, stand for the truth in a spirit of grace and humility this Christmas season, and trust God for His peace to reign in your heart and in the hearts of those around you. Take the high road of heaven and proclaim in celebration of Christ’s birth, “Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.” Christmas is God’s gift of peace in the person of His son Jesus. Am I submitted to God, and am I allowing His peace to reign in my heart and mind? How can I in humility and love bring peace to a hard family issue this holiday season?

Day 3

Be Joyful

Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity. Psalm 98:8-9

Is judgment escorted by joy? Yes, for the Lord's earth and Jesus's followers will walk hand in hand. Almighty God's judgment is accompanied by the joy of His handiwork. Therefore, celebrate Christ's coming. Celebrate His first coming for He has done marvelous things. His life was matchless in the application of pure virtue. His death was sacrificial in providing salvation for all who believe. His resurrection was electric in releasing eternal energy for all who are filled by His Holy Spirit.

There is an overflowing fountain of joy from His first coming. Celebrate also His second coming. He will judge everyone righteously and with equity. The judgment of Jesus is joyful, because it is righteous. You can rejoice because of the righteous judgment of God. Joyful surrender means you are ready for Christ's coming. Indeed, Jesus' mother, Mary, embraced this reality.

Mary understood joy at the first coming of Jesus. After the angel's words that she was to become a mom and the mother of God, she exclaimed, "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my soul rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47). Becoming a mother filled her soul with joy. Baby Jesus was her joy. She could not keep quiet, for the coming of her Lord and her child was at hand. Joy resonated in the heavens and resounded throughout all the earth. It was Christ's coming out party.

Joy was the outcome of His arrival. Mary was surprised by joy. Indeed, motherhood brings joy. Great pain is followed by even greater joy (John 16:21). Children, teens, and adult children may continue to cause pain, but don't let them steal your joy. Make sure your security and significance is in Christ and not in your son or daughter. Your identity is in Christ. Your Savior defines your success. Make sure you go to Christ for a cup of joy. Drink often. The Lord's joy is limitless.

Above all else, live your life in triumphant victory, not in dismal defeat. You are more than conquerors through Christ, through Him that loves you (Romans 8:37). The Lord's great love is your life preserver. The joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10). You serve a risen Savior who is in the world today. By God's grace, your business or ministry will make payroll. Be patient and persevere in prayer for your prodigal child or friend. They may one day grow sick of sin.

Do not allow mistreatment or inequities to rob your joy. God will one day judge with equity. His days seem longer than ours, so be patient. Turn off the depressing songs of Satan. He is a joy killer. Reject His joyless tunes. Instead, tune in to your trustworthy Savior Jesus. Sing at the top of your lungs to the Lord. Sing the new song Christ has composed. His Holy Spirit harmonizes your life with joy and peace. So sing. Sing, for you are joyful for what He has done. Sing, for you are joyful for what He is doing. Sing, for you are joyful for what He will do. The coming judgment of Jesus brings joy to Jesus's followers. Radically rejoice. Be joyful in Jesus.

Day 4

Personal Peace

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace.” Ephesians 2:13-14a

Jesus Christ is a personal Savior who brings a personal peace. One of the advantages of knowing Jesus is knowing His peace; a peace that passes all understanding. A person outside of the Lord is exposed to the unsettling elements of evil that eliminate any thought of peace. Indeed, personal peace is a by-product of personally engaging God.

Are you at peace in your life in general and your work in particular? If not, submit to the Prince of Peace (Jesus) and allow Him to shepherd you through your valley of trepidation. You may not know what the future holds, but you know who holds the future. Because Christ is peace, do not overlook His inventory that already resides in your heart by faith.

“Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you.” Job 22:21

Once we were far off without faith and in fear, but now we have been brought near to God by the belief in His son’s blood for the payment of our sins. Salvation in Jesus is a peaceful position for all who appropriate their role as a child of God. It’s when we try to substitute the peace of God with the shallow promises of the world that we get anxious.

Your heavenly Father promises you peace in His son Jesus. There is no need to go any further than faith in Him. Yes, peace can be elusive within an alluring and noisy culture, but Christ is at peace in you. Unfair family members may cause you to fret and an unreasonable boss may cause you to sweat, but in the sanctuary of your soul there is peace. So, don’t substitute faith in Christ with a false peace; instead rest in His promise.

“I will listen to what God the LORD says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants— but let them not turn to folly.” Psalm 85:8

While you rock your feverish little one to sleep, lean into the Lord’s peace. When your mind races in frantic worry, resolve in your heart that the promise of God’s peace is irrevocable. When the stock market dives at every economic uncertainty, dive deeper into the security of your Savior Jesus. Personal peace is a product of being with the one who is peace. Your Prince of Peace awaits to escort you into His calming courts of peace.

“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.” Acts 10:36

Day 5

Revival of Joy

“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” (Psalm 85:6).

Life can squeeze out your joy. Like an exhausted slice of lime or lemon, there is nothing left. You have flavored the life of others by giving to them, but now nothing remains for you. Your joy is gone. You need a revival of joy. Maybe you are battling health issues or financial woes. The pressure has gotten the best of you. Like the crushing of grapes in the preparation of wine, your juices of joy have been depleted. The only remains are dried and parched skins. You are tapped out. You are in desperate need of a jolt of joy.

You need joy to bridge you from your position of burnout back to your role as joy giver. Isn't it ironic that we can fall victim to the very thing we see as a deficiency in others? No one is immune to slipping into a joyless life. In fact there will be seasons that joy will elude us like water in the desert. We need a new infusion of joy. The revival of joy is ongoing. You can only run so long, and then you must stop and refill your joy tanks. You can remember when work brought you joy, but now you are maintaining at best. Marriage was bliss in the past—full of joy—but now you just coexist. Your relationship with God once erupted with joy, but now it is stale and distant. A revival of joy refills you on all these fronts. Revival assumes that joy once existed. Joy reigned over many aspects of your life, but certainly the joy of your salvation was once preeminent. To revive something means you bring it back into existence, back to life. So the best place to start the revival of anything is with God.

God specializes in resurrecting and reviving. He can take what is dead or dormant and breathe life into it. The breath of God gives joy. God's breath is not stale or repugnant. On the contrary, His breath is fresh and rejuvenating. Like an asthmatic gasping for air, we struggle in need of God's oxygen. Life's struggles wear us down to a pulp. We need the breath of God to revive our joy. But, you may need to alter your proximity to benefit from the breath of God. His breath is most effective up close and personal.

Like an inhaler, you need God daily in your face to transmit His joy. The joy of the Lord is not captured from a distance. It is inhaled and ingested from a position of intimacy. Do not let your joylessness leave you incoherent. God wants to clear your heart and mind. Joy is on the way, like the arrival of the cavalry in the heat of the battle. Let God rescue you, revive you, and set you back on a joy-filled journey. You are not defeated in Christ. The enemy is the loser. He is the joy killer, but his advances are temporary. Allow God to resuscitate your joy. The world won't. Work can't. People fail. And money is an illusion of joy.

So, go to the creator, dispenser and sustainer of joy. Lean on the one full of joy, Jesus. He will bring your joy back to life as He was brought back to life—full and robust. Let Him make your joy complete. His joy is your strength. Some things never change and His joy is one of them. Start by simply thinking back on when you exchanged self for a savior. You opened the door to your life and Jesus entered with a housewarming gift. It was a beautiful basket full of joy. Relive that experience and reengage with Him. His joy is not jaded—it is just right. Your joy will rub off on others, and the revival of rejoicing in God will extend from one person to another. Be joyful in Jesus, because He is the reason!

Day 6

Perfect Peace

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal.”
Isaiah 26:3-4

The world offers imperfect peace. It is temporary at best, as it comes in the form of materialism—a person—a pill—or a bottle. This caricature of peace prolongs pain and leads to long-term disappointment and disillusionment. Artificial peace restricts or rejects the peace of Almighty God, only to eventually come back and seek out what’s real. Are you able to sleep peacefully at night? Do you have an assurance deep down in your soul that Christ is in control and can be trusted? If not, let loose of the idols of worry and pride—and redirect your energies to eternal solutions. It’s answers from above that bring peace that’s within. Where there is trust in the Lord there is rest from fighting the enemy.

“When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7, NKJV).

Accessing the Lord’s peace begins by first making peace with Him. In humble surrender and submission we unlock the control of our heart to Christ and trust Him to give us what we need to follow Him and to serve others. When we exchange our agenda for His agenda—in total trust—we in turn receive the peace of God. This peace then follows our having trust in the Almighty. Peace with God results in the peace of God. Why wait until death to make peace with God?

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2).

God’s peace gives us confidence to follow Christ in ministry domestically and globally. His peace of mind is assurance that we can move forward in a relationship or a new responsibility at work. A home that is peaceful is a haven for family members and for those who need a safe environment in which to feel secure and loved. Peace produces relational fruit that lasts.

Can the Prince of Peace be trusted to get you through this challenge with your child or this season of suffering? Yes, of course He can and He wants you to experience His peace, so you can be an ambassador of peace for Almighty God. People in turmoil, who engage with your peaceful demeanor, want to know more about what you know and have. So, use the gift of peace that Jesus has given you as a platform to proclaim His truth. Give away this gift to all who will receive—and oh what a difference it will make if only one life receives its benefits! You don’t have to look far for candidates: a single parent, the jobless, a confused child, a fearful parent, an addict, the sick or a lost soul. The perfect peace of God cuts through confusion and keeps your mind and heart on Jesus.

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2-3).

Day 7

Delayed Joy

“Your prayer [Zack] has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.” Luke 1:13-15

God may delay His response to prayer, but He never forgets. A barren womb, a lost job, a prodigal child, or a spouse who has passed away are all needs He has not forgotten. Zachariah remained faithful in his prayers and worship, though his heart ached for God to provide the gift of a little life for he and his wife Elizabeth. However, the Lord’s timing is not without purpose. John’s birth—like his life, preceded Jesus’ birth as a joyous prelude.

Yes indeed, as we wait on the Lord’s provision, old prayers gain new meaning. What was once lost is found, what was once hurt is healed and what was once hopeless brings joy. We remain faithful in our prayers and worship, especially when our feelings scream that all spiritual efforts are in vain. God’s blessings follow a sequence that only later make sense. So, we can see our answered prayer as an introduction to God’s greater purpose.

“When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.” Luke 1:57-58

Do you feel barren in your soul, spirit or body? Has spiritual sterility snatched your joy? If so, take hope that your barrenness is an incubator of intimacy with your heavenly Father. It is at this precise point of inexpressible fear that He expresses His peace. Christ can birth out of barren finances, provision; from a barren womb, a baby; from a barren heart, joy. Or, God may say no, so your empty condition can only be filled by the Spirit’s fullness.

Moreover, if you are enjoying joy, then be a joy giver to those needy souls around you. In prayerful sensitivity remind others of their spiritual resources. Your smile speaks acceptance, your servant leadership models humility, your encouragement gives hope and your generosity brings joy. Delayed joy is an opportunity to look to Jesus the joy giver. Delayed joy does not mean God has forgotten—no, past prayers prepare us for future joy.

“Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.” Psalm 90:14