

The Fruit of the Spirit – Joy (Galatians 5:22-23)

Let this MIND be in you! - Philippians 2:5-11

INTRODUCTION

1. Those who are influenced and directed by the Holy Spirit will produce "the fruit of the Spirit" in their lives - cf. Ga 5:22-23
 - a. We noted in our previous study that there is not a plurality of fruits, but one fruit
 - b. Yes, only one fruit that is made up of several inter-related graces or virtues, all of which will be manifested if one is truly walking in the Spirit
2. Prominent, of course, will be the virtue of "love", which we observed...
 - a. Was defined as "active good will", that which seeks the highest good of others
 - b. Is best exemplified by Jesus Christ, who through His example has taught us what love really is - cf. Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16
 - c. Should be the "universal motive" for all that we do - 1 Co 16:14
3. As noted in Ga 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit also involves "joy"
 - a. It is interesting to note the relationship between the Holy Spirit and joy in several passages:
 - 1) The kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Spirit" - cf. Ro 14:17
 - 2) The Thessalonians had received the word "with joy of the Holy Spirit" - 1 Th 1:6
 - 3) And of course, our text in Ga 5:22
 - b. Therefore, one who is led by the Spirit, and walking by the Spirit, will be someone filled with much joy in his or her life!

[But what is joy? How can Christians be filled with joy? As we seek to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, let's take a closer look at "joy"...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF "JOY"

- A. THE GREEK WORD IS "CHARA"..
 1. Which Thayer defines as "joy, gladness"
 2. Vine adds "delight" -- By one count the word is used 60 times in the NT
- B. THE VERB FORM OF "CHARA" IS "CHAIREIN"..
 1. Which is most often translated "to rejoice"
 2. It is used 72 times in the NT
- C. CLOSELY RELATED IS THE WORD "CHARIS"..
 1. Which is the word most often translated as "grace"
 2. Vine defines grace in the objective sense as "that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard"
 3. Therefore grace is what produces joy!

D. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN "GRACE" AND "JOY"...

1. One's joy is directly proportional to the grace one has received, or at least to the perception of grace that one has received
 - a. Receive a small gift, and your joy might be minimal
 - b. Receive a large gift, and your joyous reaction is greater
2. When Christians' don't have much joy in their lives, something is wrong: "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere." (BILLY SUNDAY)
3. Here is one explanation why Christians may be joyless: "The reason why many poor souls have so little heat of joy in their hearts is that they have so little light of Gospel knowledge in their mind. The further a soul stands from the light of truth, the further he must be from the heat of comfort." (WILLIAM GURNALL)

E. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS ABIDING....

1. The Lord certainly does not want Christians to be joyless - cf. Jn 15:11
2. The joy He gives is "inexpressible and full of glory", able to sustain us in the worst of circumstances - cf. 1 Pe 1:6-8
 - a. Unlike the "passing pleasures of sin" (He 11:25) which are fleeting
 - b. Even the good things in life eventually prove to be "vanity" - Ecc 2:10-11
3. Therefore He has made it possible for the Christian to say with Paul:

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" - Ph 4:4

[A failure to remember those things graciously given us which make for joy in our lives can explain why some Christians do not have the degree of "joy" (gladness, delight) they should have.

But Christians have every reason to be joyful. We just need to remember what it is that produces joy. Let's review just a few...]

II. SOURCES OF JOY FOR THE CHRISTIAN

A. JOY IS A CONSEQUENCE OF FAITH...

1. Joy comes from having "a confident trust" (faith) in God - cf. Ph 1:25
 - a. Without faith in God and Christ, we cannot experience abiding joy
 - b. Why is faith essential to joy?
 - 1) It dispels the attitudes that prevent joy from occurring
 - 2) Such as "worry" (cf. Mt 6:25-30), "doubt" and "fear" - cf. Mt 14:27-31
 2. Since joy is based upon faith, this emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in producing joy...
 - a. For faith comes from the Word of God - Ro 10:17
 - 1) The Word of God produces faith
 - 2) In turn faith produces joy - cf. Ro 15:13
 - b. The very teachings of Jesus are designed to give us joy - Jn 15:11; 17:13
- Thus the need to read and study the Bible daily!

B. JOY IS ALSO THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE...

1. Obedience to the Word of God fosters joy in the hearts of the obedient
 - a. Notice the conversion of the Samaritans - Ac 8:5-8
 - b. Also the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch - Ac 8:35-38
 - c. And the conversion of the Thessalonians - 1 Th 1:6
2. Conversely, disobedience dispels joy and produces fear! - cf. He 10:26-27
 - Could lack of joy be an indication of lack of obedience on your part?

C. JOY IS BASED UPON FORGIVENESS...

1. The guilt of sin is a major reason why many people lack joy
 - a. Awareness of such guilt causes stress, unhappiness, and worry
 - b. Even as Paul illustrated in describing the condition of one struggling with the problem of sin - cf. Ro 7:22-24
2. But where there is forgiveness, there can be joy!
 - a. Consider the 32nd Psalm of David...
 - 1) He introduces his theme by speaking of the "blessedness" (or joy) of one whose sins are forgiven - Ps 32:1-2
 - 2) He describes how the guilt of his sin affected him inwardly - Ps 32:3-4
 - 3) But at last he confessed his sin and was forgiven - Ps 32:5
 - 4) He describes the joy that the righteous (i.e., the forgiven) can experience - Ps 32:10-11
 - b. The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in Ps 51:7-12
 - c. Today, those in Christ can enjoy forgiveness of sins and the joy that follows - cf. Ro 5:1-2,10-11
 - If you have not yet received the forgiveness found only in Christ, there is no way to experience the abiding joy that comes only "in the Lord"

D. JOY ALSO COMES FROM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP...

1. It is a joy just to "see" such fellowship
 - a. Paul experienced joy by witnessing love and fellowship in Philemon - Phile 7
 - b. He also found great joy in learning of the restoration of brethren - 2 Co 7:7
2. How much more, the joy of "experiencing" such fellowship!
 - a. Paul rejoiced in the fellowship he had with the Philippians - Ph 4:10
 - b. John spoke of the joy that comes of Christian fellowship reunited - 2 Jn 12
 - Are you developing and nurturing the kind of Christian fellowship that adds to our joy?

E. JOY COMES FROM CHRISTIAN SERVICE...

1. There is the joy of spreading the gospel
 - a. Barnabas rejoiced in the conversions at Antioch - Ac 11:20-23
 - b. The Christian Jews delighted to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles - Ac 15:3
2. There is great joy in seeing the spiritual progress of others
 - a. This was a frequent source of joy to Paul - Ro 16:19; Co 2:5; 1 Th 3:6-9
 - b. John wrote that this was the highest form of joy - 3 Jn 4
 - c. One reason this is true is that those whom we have brought to Christ...
 - 1) Will not only be a source of joy for us now

- 2) But especially in the day of Christ! - cf. 1 Th 2:19-20
- 3. Jesus also spoke of the "blessedness" (i.e., joy) of giving to others - Ac 20:35
 - All those who are willing to become involved in serving the Lord, whether it be through teaching or the giving of one's time, energy or money, will experience joy from such service!

CONCLUSION

1. The wonderful joy of the Lord is open to all who would receive it through such things as:

- a. Faith in Christ
- b. Obedience to His Will
- c. Forgiveness through His blood
- d. Fellowship with His disciples
- e. Service in His Kingdom
- And it is the kind of joy that can sustain us through life, as Nehemiah told Israel:

"The joy of the Lord is your strength" - Neh 8:10

2. Certainly those who are...

- a. Born of the Spirit
- b. Walking in the Spirit
- c. Being led by the Spirit will be involved in all these things, and as a consequence will bear the fruit of the Spirit which includes "joy"

3. Why not begin experiencing this joy today by...

- a. Obeying the gospel of Christ
- b. Receiving the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ
- c. Participate in the fellowship of Christian love as you work toward bringing others to salvation in Christ - cf. Ac 2:38-42