

Kingdom Power and Kingdom Joy

In Your Life Today!

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God has given us his spirit as a deposit until we reap the full extent of His grace in the Kingdom of God (Eph. 1:13-14). Therefore, we have kingdom power in our lives today! As the Book of Romans states:

The kingdom of God ... is [a matter] of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17-18).

Upon receiving the spirit of God, we receive also that which is *of* His spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). When we possess His spirit, we possess all these qualities of His spirit. This fruit of His spirit is just that - *of* His spirit. They are not a result of anything we did or can do. Through faith we receive His spirit and through that same faith we receive these blessings.

So then, why do so many Christians, those possessing God's spirit, lack one or more of these qualities in their lives? Since God has been teaching me about joy, I will focus on it in this article. But what is true of joy is also true of all the fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

As believers we receive and we possess joy. It doesn't have to and shouldn't leave us. It isn't dependent on outer circumstances or even inner feelings or emotions. Joy is also not the same as happiness, which is dependent on outer circumstances. The only time we lack joy, or don't have joy, is when we choose to give it away. At times we give up our inheritance of joy for sorrow, pain, frustration, anger or hatred.

Imagine a steep rock plateaued and surrounded by an ocean. Waves of fear, sorrow, anger, etc. are present and do touch our lives. But they need not reign on our rock. Jesus is our rock on which we stand, but we are responsible for what sits on that rock with us. When frustration begins to climb up there we must acknowledge it and kick it off. We

must not even let the fingers of negative thoughts or feelings pull themselves up onto our pedestals. When we see them we must sweep them right back over the edge with the broom of joy. Visualizing this helps us realize and acknowledge what is happening and that something must be done. Seeing yourself do this also helps you claim the victory that is yours.

We are entitled to joy. We are given joy. It is ours to possess. God Himself gave it to us. The joy He gives is greater than any other joy. And as I said, it isn't dependent on another person, on circumstances or on possessions, or the lack of them. Therefore, people, things or circumstances have no power over the joy that we have been given. We believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy (I Peter 1:8-9). God fills us with a greater joy than anything created can give us (Psalm 4:7). His joy in us is our strength and we need not grieve (Nehemiah 8:10). If we want to be strong, we need to have joy.

Jesus desires that we have joy and that our lives would be full and complete. He tells us that when we follow His commands and remain in His love, our joy is complete. He says that He expresses His love for us so that His joy could be in us so that our joy would be complete (John 15:9-11). If Jesus is concerned that we would have complete joy, we ought to be concerned as well. He tells us to ask for what we lack and He will give it and our joy will be complete (John 16:24).

As I searched for more of God's understanding of joy in the Word three important things were revealed to me. First of all, our joy increases as we digest the Word of God. As Jeremiah said,

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight (Jer. 15:16).

God's words are joy to us. Why? Because they bring us His salvation, His healing and His hope. He speaks to us and reveals Himself, His love and His faithfulness to us by His words. Therefore, the Bible is one place we find joy. There, it is available to us.

Secondly, and most predominately in Scripture, joy abounds in praise and worship of God. In the Old Testament we see the magnitude of worship and it's importance not only for God, but also for the worshipper as well. We aren't merely to worship to find joy, but also to express joy. Look at Nehemiah:

On that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away (Nehemiah 12:43).

In this verse (and many in the Book of Psalms) we see that praise and worship is not silent taking place only in the heart. It is expressed outwardly and with one's heart, mind, body and with all one's might. Their praises were heard even far away. WOW! What rejoicing! What Joy! In another example of praise Nehemiah (Neh. 8:17) records that the Israelites had not celebrated like this for a long time, and their joy was very great. We must reflect; when was the last time our joy was "very great?" When was the last time we "celebrated?"

God's joy is found in His presence, in his dwelling place.

O Lord, surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence" (Psalm 21:6).

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, (Psalm 16:11).

Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and joy in His dwelling place" (I Chronicles 16:27).

If you desire strength or joy, go into His dwelling place. There you will be strengthened, revived and restored.

"Clap your hands all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises (Psalms 47:1,5,6).

Again we see the connection between praise and joy. They are reciprocal. We praise and are filled with joy. And we have joy and therefore we praise.

Thirdly, the Scriptures reinforced my conviction that sharing the Word brings one of the

greatest joys one can attain. What greater joy is there above praising God and revealing that God and His Messiah to others?! Sharing the hope of His coming kingdom gives us that inexpressible and glorious joy. Throughout Paul's writings we see that much of his joy lies in his children, his converts, his brothers and sisters in Christ.

For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy" (I Thess. 2:19-20).

Indeed, people saved are God's joy. They ought to be ours as well!

If we want to keep joy and experience it more fully in our lives daily, we must not allow negative thoughts or feelings a place in our minds. Joy must remain on top of our rock, even though in the world there are struggles, heartaches and pain. What has been helping me attain this domination of joy and find victory in this spiritual battle is, as I shared earlier, visualizing the plateau and myself defending it, not allowing any thought or feeling to invade or overcome my joy. I see myself sweeping or kicking any negative thought or feeling back over the edge from where it came. Then at the same time I focus on the Lord and immediately come into His presence with a song of praise. Singing "hallelujah, hallelujah ..." is the quickest and most effective for me. I keep repeating it and giving Him praise until His joy is victorious in my heart and mind over whatever thought or person or situation invaded His territory.

At this point, recalling His Word also encourages and gives strength. This also helps us to not give the Devil a foothold in our hearts and minds. Victory is ours, if we claim it. Our joy will be restored and we will have even more reason to rejoice and praise God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the holy spirit (Romans 15:13).