

Lesson 4: I Still Have Joy Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, James 1:2 (NIV)

Weeping may last through the night but joy comes with the morning. Psalms 30:5 (NLT)

There are two kinds of joy. The fleeting joy that the world gives. And the lasting joy that God's Spirit provides.

The joy that we find in this world is allusive. It is like chasing a mirage. People spend years thinking that when they finally get that promotion, or when they eventually get out of debt - They will be happy. And, yet, when they finally reach the place where they thought they would find happiness, they only experience more longing. Why? They foolishly thought that they were the source of their own joy. But, your Heavenly Father doesn't want His child sitting around "grieved and depressed." That's why God's Word says that He's given you the very joy of the Lord to be your strength and stronghold (Nehemiah 8:10 -AMP). So, while the world is searching for happiness, the Holy Spirit is sprouting seeds of joy and gladness inside of you. And this Fruit of the Holy Spirit is God's gift, to be your strength in times of turmoil.

Reflection Questions:

Why do you think God tells you that His joy is what acts as your strength during trying times? Can you think of a time when His joy kept you strong?

When things are going well for you, do you act happy and content? What if things are not going the way you think that they should be, do you start to lose your faith and act negatively? Satan wants you to act negatively. God wants you to react joyful whether you are having good times or bad times.

Lesson 5: Let there be Peace There are two kinds of peace that we have as Christians. We have peace with God, and we have the peace of God. Let me explain the difference.

THEREFORE, SINCE we are justified (acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing with God) through faith, let us [grasp the fact that we] have [the peace of reconciliation to hold and to [enjoy] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) - Romans 5:1 (AMP)

In addition to Jesus' death buying you peace with God, it also serves as a cleansing sacrifice to allow you into the presence of the Lord.

With the Holy Spirit now living inside of you, you are able to experience the peace of God. This is the kind of peace that the Fruit of the Holy Spirit manifests.

We are told in Philippians how to receive this peace for ourselves.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

We are promised a peace that exceeds our understanding. That means, it is a peace that does not make sense to us mentally. In times when we should be pulling out our hair and biting our nails, we feel an overwhelming peace in our spirits.

I think that, more and more, bearing this Fruit of the Holy Spirit is something that Christians struggle with.

Reflection Questions: In what area of your life is there fear, anxiety and worry? Fear, anxiety and worry come from Satan. God wants to give you peace. Read your Bible and pray. Submit to God and resist the Devil.

Why do you think so many Christians today struggle with receiving and maintaining God's peace? Do you feel that you have a problem maintaining your peace?