

The Joy of the Lord

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Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the **joy of the LORD is your strength.**” (Nehemiah 8:10 ESV)

People are rebuilding their city, there is discouragement and opposition

Ezra and Nehemiah re-affirm and explain God's word and his promises

This day is holy, do not mourn or weep but celebrate because of the goodness of God

They did not have to change themselves but they needed to rely on the perfect and unchanging nature and personality of God, their Father

The joy **of the Lord** - not their joy

God is so content and secure in who he is that he is filled with perfect joy (despite everything happening on earth!)

He can rest in his eternal nature of being complete and perfect, he has everything in his hands - sorted!

In his presence there are no worries or concerns

There is no anxiety in Heaven

If you remove **all** worry, stress, anxiety, pain, heartache, loss, sickness, debt, loss, bereavement, redundancy, fear

Then you can be pretty joyful

That's the environment of Heaven - perfect joy

"But in this world everything is upside down. That which, if it could be prolonged here, would be a truancy, is likest that which in a better country is the End of ends. Joy is the serious business of Heaven."
(C S Lewis)

Nehemiah tells the people to live in joy.

Not **their** joy which is dependent on their circumstances

But receive and live in the joy of the Lord

For us too, there is this greater joy. We can receive the joy of Heaven into our hearts as a gift

It's life-changing

You make known to me the path of life; in **your** presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 ESV)

Restore to me the joy of **your** salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:12 ESV)

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; **everlasting joy** shall be upon their heads; they shall **obtain** gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10 ESV)

His joy is given to us as a gift

Our own joy is dependent on what is going on around us but his joy is dependent on who he is

Our joy ebbs and flows - his joy is constant

His joy is a gift he gives to us (no strings attached)

But if you step into My life in union with Me and if My words live powerfully within you then you can ask whatever you desire and it will be done. When your lives bear abundant fruit, you demonstrate that you are My mature disciples who glorify My Father! “I love each of you with the same love that the Father loves Me. Let My love nourish your hearts. If you keep My commands, you will live in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands, for I am nourished and empowered by His love. My purpose for telling you these things is so that the joy that I experience will fill your hearts with overflowing gladness! (John 15:7-11 TPT)

"These things I have spoken to you, that **my joy may be in you**, and that your joy may be full." (V11 ESV)

The ways we receive and live in his joy:

Step into his life in union with him

His words live powerfully in us

We can ask for the desires of our heart

Bear abundant fruit (we bear fruit when we are intimately joined with him - v4)

We are loved with the same love as Jesus

Our hearts are nourished with his love

Nourished and empowered when we live in love

Living in love opens a doorway for us to
receive his joy into our hearts

His joy within us becomes a strength

His joy within us enables us

His joy within us empowers us

It's like a tea bag..... 



Even in tough times we can still experience his joy -
and it is in those times when our joy is not enough!

My fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties see it as an invaluable opportunity to **experience all the joy that you can!** For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things. And then as your endurance grows even stronger it will release perfection into every part of your being until there is nothing missing and nothing lacking. (James 1:2-4 TPT)

Joy overcomes.....

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. (ESV)

Be cheerful with joyous celebration in every
season of life. Let joy overflow, for you are united
with the Anointed One! (TPT)

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in
him! (The Message)

When **his** joy fills us it becomes a source of strength within us

It helps us overcome

And it leads us into a place of peace, where there is peace there is also rest and contentment

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6 ESV)

