

## Fruit of the Spirit Joy

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1. Joy as a fruit of the Spirit exists because it is a contradiction for a Christian to be otherwise. See Romans 14:17, Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; Luke 10:17-20. The point is, how can someone who has been saved from the consequences of his acts, who has been chosen by God, and who has been given a promise of an eternity of happiness, walk around joyless?
  - A. How does a “joyful” person act? If joy is not mindless euphoria or silly giddiness, what is it? How can someone be “joyful” in the midst of persecution or in the midst of a terrible ordeal or even in the face of death itself?
  - B. Specifically, how does Jesus’ resurrection and His promise of eternal life for believers actually define joy?
2. There are many stumbling blocks to joy.
  - A. Sin or sinful attitudes commonly rob many people of joy.
  - B. Another impediment to joy is misplaced confidence by placing faith in ourselves or others, rather than in God. This leads to disappointment. Joy cannot be found in accomplishments, even when those accomplishments are godly.
  - C. Joy cannot be found in a painless life. Scott Peck in *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED* says that all mental illness results in one way or another from a lack of willingness to undergo problems and the suffering inherent in them. Peck goes on to say that mental health requires four “techniques” of suffering: delaying gratification, acceptance of responsibility, dedication to truth, and balancing. How does all this relate to joy? We need to learn that joy and suffering can go hand in hand.
3. To a certain extent, a lack of joy might be attributable to a “half-empty” outlook on life. Contrast this with the admonition to “give thanks in all circumstances.” Is there ever a circumstance, conditions so bleak, that there is nothing to be thankful for? Cultivate a thankful heart.