

nov 9

count it all joy

"now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." heb 12:11

very often in life, we find ourselves in a place where we no longer desire the things of the world, such as riches, notoriety, or power; instead, we simply desire joy. joy differs from happiness in that happiness can be a fleeting flash of emotion, whereas joy is a deeply rooted constant that can be obtained. where can we find truths about joy that will grow our faith in the process?

1. joy does not depend on circumstances

the joy you have in your heart and spirit is not dependent upon your circumstances. life can be full of success, wins, exciting adventures, and surges of sunlit hope and be full of joy. life can also be full of struggle, tears, and storms, but joy can still exist amidst all that is occurring. the true reality is not what we can see, touch, and feel. instead, it is the rooted assurance that the joy of the Lord is present no matter the circumstances.

2. joy is the quiet assurance that God is who He says He is

when we stop assigning joy to the category of happiness, we can then experience the peace that flows from knowing, no matter how difficult the storm is

around us, that God is ever-present and can be trusted as faithful.

3. joy from God is strength

through Christ, we can find true salvation and, in Him; the strength to endure whatever comes our way. in saying that the joy of the Lord is our strength, we are recalling that it is not something within of our own cultivating or doing, but rather through the Spirit of God that we can find that strength and joy in the process.

4. count it all as joy

joy is also a choice we can make. james 1:2-4 reminds us that we can count it all as joy, even the trials, for they serve a greater purpose in our lives, "consider it pure joy, my brothers." james 1:2 trials will come no matter how rich, successful, or powerful you may be; there is no avoiding them. when trials do come, instead of having a victim mentality and succumbing to the depths of wallowing, we mature, learn, and become refined by the fire.

5. joy comes in the morning

most all of us can relate to nights where we have cried ourselves to sleep, where we have ached within so deeply it is shocking that our bodies still have the capacity for the function of breath, but as David reminds us, there is a joy that can come in the morning. that dawn may not be a literal span of hours after, but there is a hope that morning will come and, with it, a newfound joy peeking through to dry our tears and to surround us with a warm embrace of hope to come.

6. reaping joy

when we allow joy to be something we carry within, it does not lie dormant, and we can find joy even in the tears that fall to the ground. this joy is in knowing that the harvest will one day come, be it on this side of heaven or the life to come, and that our tears are not wasted. instead, our tears are part of what is being sown into the ground to cultivate and enrich the seed that when the harvest does come, it is that of double joy. joy in the harvest, and joy in knowing there was purpose in the process.

7. fruit of the Spirit

there are several fruits of the Spirit, but one of the most important is joy. these fruits are the result of the work of God within and throughout our lives and things we ought to readily ask God to help us cultivate. the more we practice these beautiful qualities, the more we experience the fullness of life in being His vessels here on earth.

8. the joy of heaven

the truth of joy is that it is felt and experienced in heaven when things on earth occur. when someone comes to repentance and salvation, there is a great multitude rejoicing in heaven, and rightfully so. here on earth, we can participate in that joy by recognizing how wonderful it is when someone comes to Christ.

9. we can ask God for joy

as children of God, we have the ability and opportunity to ask God for joy. we serve a gracious and kind Father who loves to give His children good gifts. by

allowing God to work fully within us and in our surrender, we can then experience what it means to be in full joy and light. let us hold firm to this hope and readily ask God for more joy and more of His Spirit.

remember: "do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." neh 8:10