

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

JOY

Family Study Guides

FRUIT OF GOD'S SPIRIT

"Joy"

Family Study Guide

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

[**Parents and Instructors:** While younger children will not fully comprehend the concepts of spiritual joy, this lesson offers ways to help them evaluate the difference between real and false happiness according to the Word of God.]

Objectives:

- Discuss the three types of joy: circumstances; relationships with others; God and His Spirit.
- Understand the difference between real and false happiness.
- Review some Biblical examples of joy (David, Christ, Ancient Israel, Prodigal Son).

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 29:18 {GNT} *"A nation without God's guidance is a nation without order. **Happy are those who keep God's Law!**"*

Definition: *Joy* – the state of great happiness, rejoicing, enjoyment, delight and gladness of heart. Not being emotionally controlled by circumstances.

Different types of joy:

- 1] Happiness when circumstances in life evoke a positive reaction or state of mind
- 2] Happiness in our relationships with others
- 3] Spiritual joy that comes from God and His Spirit

1. Happiness - positive reaction or state of mind to circumstances

Let's note first that our attitude will affect whether or not we are happy with whatever happens in our lives.

The apostle Paul – had a very interesting life and a lot of good and bad things happened to him. Here is how he reacted:

Philippians 4:11 {NCV} *I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens.*

[v11 Living Bible: *"I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little."*]

4:12 {GNT} *I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. :13 I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.*

⇒ **As a family, discuss how to apply Paul's philosophy of happiness in everyday life.**

God did not create us to be miserable. He created us to be joyous and happy people. But realize that Godly joy does not depend on external things – but rather on our state of mind.

ADAM and EVE

Think about the circumstances God put Adam and Eve in. Adam and Eve had everything and every reason to be happy. However, Satan told them they should not be happy with the things God had given them, but that if they could get more, then they would really be happy! Satan was introducing a false happiness and joy.

Satan told them to eat from the tree that God said not to. And then:

Genesis 3:6 {TLB} *The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking it was! And it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, and he ate it too.*

God became angry with them for their disobedience and for not being satisfied with what they had. Adam and Eve ended up losing all the good things they had. Life became very difficult for them.

- ✓ **Compare how much joy they must have had in their lives before they disobeyed God – and how they must have felt after they disobeyed God.**

What do these scriptures teach us about true joy and false joy?

- **Psalm 1:1** {GNT} *Happy are those who reject the advice of evil people, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God. 2 Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the Lord, and they study it day and night.*
- **Prov 15:21** {GNT} *Stupid people are happy with their foolishness, but the wise will do what is right.*

⇒ As a family – review a situation where “pursuit of happiness” ended up with sadness instead. (Possible examples):

- A time when a child stole something they wanted - and ended up with punishment and restrictions as a result.
- A time when an adult bought something that was more than they could afford and ended up with damaging debts (or similar life-lesson to pass on to your children).

God wants for us to have happiness and joy when good things happen. For example, the birth of a child brings joy.

Luke 1:13 *But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 1:57 Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.*

⇒ **Parents, talk about how you felt when your children were born.**

It is good and natural for us to have this type of happiness. But often times this feeling of joy changes with changes in circumstances. Let's notice the following:

DAVID

Review the circumstances and David's reactions when the Ark of the Covenant was being returned to Israel in **2 Samuel chapter 6**.

- David was sad when the Philistines had possession of the ark.
- He was happy when Israel got it back.
- He was unhappy when it tipped over and someone was killed.
- He was filled with joy when it was finally returned to Jerusalem.

While David was happy with the good circumstances surrounding the location of the ark, he expresses that his true joy was because of what was **IN the ark**.

- ✓ **Do you know what was in the ark?** [The Ten Commandments = showing God’s way of life.]
Psalm 19:8 {GNT} *The laws of the Lord are right, and those who obey them are happy.*
Psalm 119:14 {TPT} *I find more joy in following what you tell me to do than in chasing after all the wealth of the world.*
Psalm 119:143 {NLT} *As pressure and stress bear down on me, I find joy in your commands.*

King David found out the difference between true joy and false joy from personal experience.

In **2 Samuel chapters 11 & 12** we read that David was looking for happiness by committing adultery with Bathsheba. In the end - there was little to rejoice about. When David disobeyed God – he suffered a lot of penalties for his sins. During this time that David was not close to God – he did not even have spiritual joy. When he repented, he knew that he could once again have real joy given to him by God.

Read the following scriptures and discuss the difference between true and false happiness.

[Relate these principles to a time when you or one of your children messed up and paid a penalty, but was forgiven. Discuss how doing things right bring real joy].

- **Psalm 51:8** {GNT} *Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed me and broken me, I will be happy once again. **51:11** ...do not take your holy spirit away from me. **12** Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.*
- **Proverbs 29:18** {NLT} *When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.*
- **Psalm 32:1** {GNT} *Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned. **2** Happy is the one whom the Lord does not accuse of doing wrong and who is free from all deceit.*

Let’s continue to look at some things that bring real joy.

REBUILDING JERUSALEM’S WALL

When the Jews followed God’s direction to “do the work” of building the walls of Jerusalem, they had great joy – in spite of the fact that it was hard work, they met opposition, and the wall was not as good as it once was.

Nehemiah 12:27 *Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps. **12:43** Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for **God had made them rejoice with great joy**; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.*

Also, when they found God’s law, they read that they were to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. When they obeyed God by keeping the Feast, they had great joy!

Nehemiah 8:17 *So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And **there was very great gladness**. **18** Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.*

So, it is with us. God instructs us to save a tithe in order to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. When the Feast comes, we are told:

Deuteronomy 14:25 {Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)} *...take the money in your hand and go to the place the Lord your God chooses. ²⁶You may spend the money on anything you want: cattle, sheep, wine, beer, or anything you desire. You are to feast there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice with your family. ²⁷Do not neglect the Levite within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance among you.*

When we go to the Feast of Tabernacles – we have the three types of joy.

1. Often, we get to go to interesting places and do fun things at the Feast. We can “eat out” and order special things that we want. We “rejoice” in these things.
2. We have joy because we have special family time with our physical family, friends, and church family. We also help others to rejoice through our giving and service to others.
3. Most importantly, we have the joy of learning about and obeying God. We rejoice in hearing what God will do in the Millennium. We rejoice in looking forward to the second resurrection when billions of people will be raised up and learn about God’s way of life!

Rejoicing at the Feast is a type of the true joy people will have in the World Tomorrow.

Isaiah 51:11 (NIV) *The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

⇒ **As a family, list as many things you can think of that can cause rejoicing at the Feast.**

⇒ **What makes you the happiest at the Feast?**

2. RELATIONSHIPS with others brings joy

Whether physical family, our church family, or the God Family - good family relationships bring us joy!

Joy of parent/child relationships:

- **Proverbs 23:24** {GNT} *A righteous person's parents have good reason to be happy. You can take pride in a wise child. **25** Let your father and mother be proud of you; give your mother that happiness.*
- **Proverbs 23:15** {ISV} *My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart will greatly rejoice. **16** My innermost being will be glad when your lips speak what is right.*
- **Proverbs 10:1** {NCV} *A wise son makes his father happy, but a foolish son makes his mother sad.*
- God the Father rejoiced at the actions of Jesus. God said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matt 3:17)
- **Have your children talk about things they do that make you happy.**
- **Parents – talk about specific situations where you rejoiced over your children’s actions. Discuss how seeing them following God’s ways brings you joy – and doing wrong brings sorrow.**

In the story of the “**Prodigal Son**” (**Luke 15**), the father was sad and disappointed when his son went off looking for happiness by spending money and disobeying God. The father greatly rejoiced when the son came back home and repented. It gives God great joy when we do the right thing, too.

There is great joy when we have good relationships with those in the Church.

John’s reference to “children,” refers to members in the Church, but the principle also applies to parents with their children.

3 John 1:2 {NIV} *Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

- ✓ **What are some of the things you enjoy most about your relationships in the Church?**
(Camp, Sabbath services, Feast, etc.)

3. SPIRITUAL JOY – our relationship with God

OK –here is the tough one that we can really only do with God’s Spirit working in us:

Luke 6:22 {NIV} *Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.*

[People in these circumstances would have little reason to rejoice – but here is what Jesus says:]

Luke 6:23 *Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.*

Yeah, right... While these verses seem counter-intuitive, they do begin to explain how God gives us joy, even in the face of trials.

Notice the reason Jesus gives as to WHY and HOW we can have this joy: *“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, **because great is your reward in heaven.**”*

Jesus’ joy and our joy comes from God’s promises to us:

Hebrews 12:1 *...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

⇒ **Discuss: What joy did Jesus experience after His suffering and death as a human?**

True spiritual joy comes from 1) our relationship with God, 2) through an un-wavering faith in the sacrifice of the Son, and 3) belief in the Kingdom of God!

Romans 5:10 (NLT) *For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.*

On the evening of Passover Jesus explained this joy and how each of us can have it. Our relationship with God also includes a right relationship with others in the Family of God.

John 15:10 *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 12“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

This deep relationship and these actions are only possible as a fruit of God’s Spirit.

John 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

When we are not “feeling the joy” – when things are not going well – when we get discouraged – when things are so hard that we aren’t even sure we can go on, Jesus says this:

John 16:23 ... *Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. 24 ... ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*

Only with God’s help can we have this true and everlasting joy. Don’t try it by yourself!

Here is another statement that is hard to understand – unless we have a complete belief in God’s plan.

James 1:2 {NCV} *My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, 3 because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience. 4 Let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do. Then you will be perfect and complete and will have everything you need. 5 But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it...*

This describes how God can help us approach life when things are hard. Perhaps this illustration will help to understand.

Med Students have to go through years of study, expense, time, practice and dedication to become a Surgeon. The thing that keeps them going is looking toward the end result of all the trouble it takes to get their Doctor’s Degree. When it is all done, they will be able to help people and reap the reward of their labors.

For those who follow God’s ways, this is the end result of any suffering or trials that we go through.

Revelation 20:4 {NLT} *Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God.... They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 This is the first resurrection... 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.*

This understanding and these actions are only possible as a fruit of God’s Spirit.

Additional Resources for Family Studies:

- **Sermon on “Joy”** by Gary Petty <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/fruits-of-the-spirit-joy-0>
- **Sermon on “Joy”** by Robin Webber <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/strengthening-the-spiritual-muscle-of-joy>
- **UCG Article: “The Fruit of the Spirit—Joy”** by Don Hooser <https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/the-fruit-of-the-spirit-joy-foundation-for-a-positive-life>

Suggested Classroom Activities

- ✓ Discussion: What makes you happy?
- ✓ Have the kids “Google” - “*whatever makes you happy*” quotes (in ‘image’) Have them analyze the quotes and discuss potential problems and fallacies. Discuss the “*Do whatever makes you happy*” philosophy in relation to Adam and Eve eating from the tree, and King David seeking happiness with Bathsheba, the Prodigal Son story.
- ✓ Is there a false joy? What if someone thought it would make them happy to have your phone, your dog, or something else that belongs to you, so they took it? Is that a true joy?

Happiness brought about from circumstances can be a true or a false happiness. For example, a person might experience joy from having a new cell phone. Which circumstances would be good happiness, and which would be wrong type of happiness?

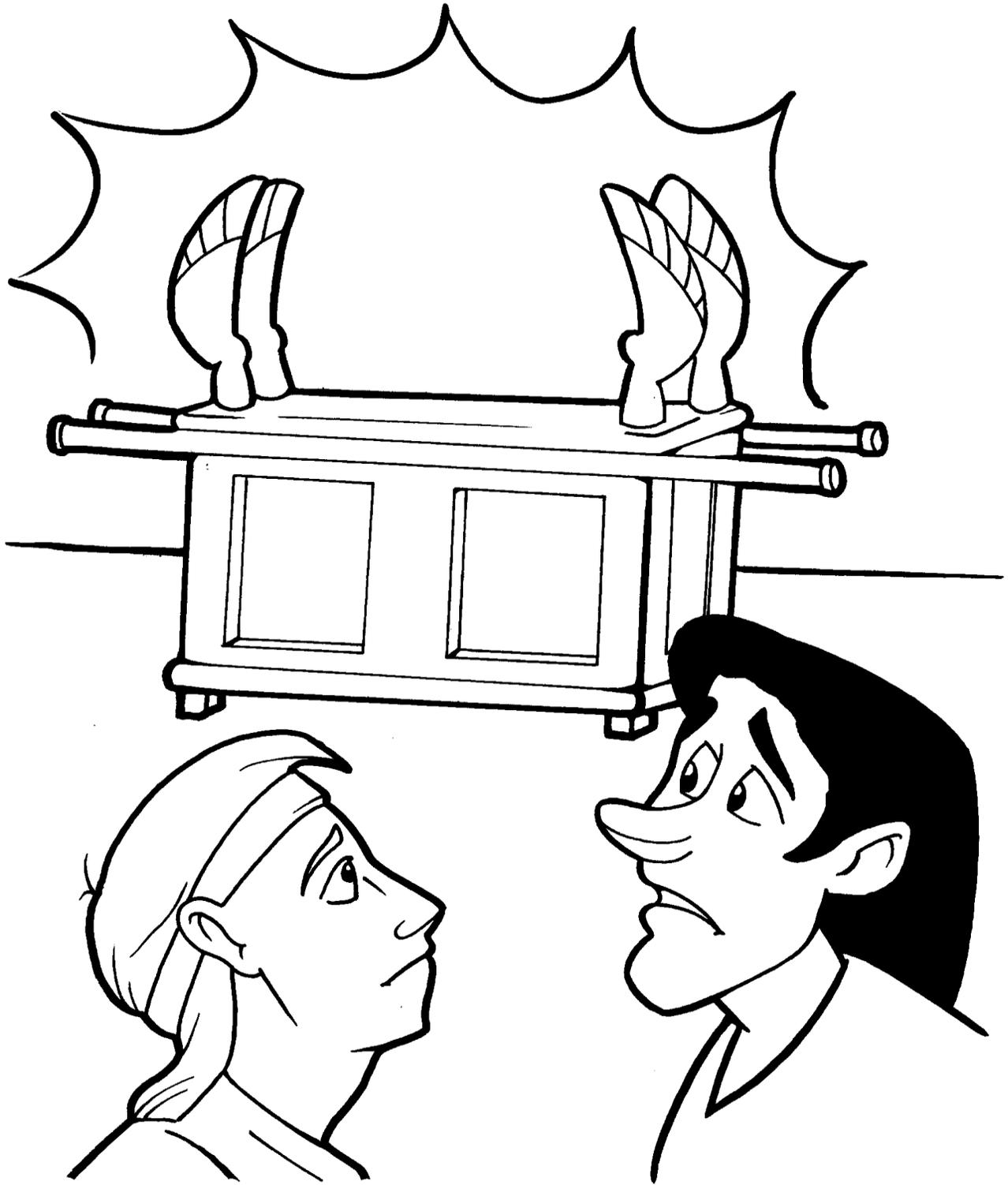
- The person stole the phone so they could have one.
 - The girl is happy because she is glad that she can keep in touch with her parents now.
 - The boy is happy because he can look at bad websites without his parents knowing.
 - The boy was satisfied with his old phone, but this one will help him keep up with his homework better.
- ✓ Think of some situations where people with a lot of wealth and things might not be happy. [Example - the parents who bribed people to get their kids in college in the 2019 scandal – and got caught.]
 - ✓ **Relate a real life situation to the story of David and Bathsheba:**
Nobody likes to get in trouble but sometimes when we learn lessons from our mistakes – it can greatly add to a happy life. It might make you happy temporarily to skip class and do something else other than homework. When the teacher tells you and your parents that you will flunk the class – you are no longer happy. If you are given a chance to make up the work, and pass the class – you are happy with the result if you follow through with the right actions.
 - ✓ How is joy connected to the other fruits of God’s Holy Spirit?
 - ✓ As a group, brainstorm some daily habits that can help you to be more joyful. Consider each type of joy.
 - ✓ Sing the hymn “There is Joy in my Heart” together. Then talk about the words and what they mean. Why do the events in the song make us joyful? How can we keep that joy in our heart even when we’re not having the best day? Talk about how this song and other hymns can help us to stay joyful.
 - ✓ Stand all students in the center of a room. Instruct students to walk to one side of the room if they hear you say something that would cause “fake joy” and the other side of the room if it would cause “true joy.” Read out these scenarios and discuss why each would be real or fake. Then, give each student a piece of printer or construction paper and fold it in half. Label one side “fake joy” and the other side “real joy.” Have them make their own list of comparisons using words or drawings.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

True Joy	Fake Joy

THE ARK IS BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

(2 SAMUEL 6:1-19)



"And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the Ark of God."