

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

June 2016

No. 366

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT: JOY

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)

Second on the list of the fruits of the spirit is joy.

Joy is in the grouping of the three fruits that are about our relationship with God. Of course, joy is a wonderful feeling of happiness. It's the feeling we have when something important goes our way, when we are reunited with someone dear to us that we have not seen in quite a while, when a baby is born, when people we care about are married. As Christians, we feel

THE HARVESTER
141 County Road 474
Woodland, AL 36280
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



joy when someone obeys the gospel, or when someone returns to the church.

Everyone feels joy. Life has natural ups and downs, and it can be a roller coaster. Good times come and the good feelings come along too. Is this the fruit of the spirit? Maybe, but I think there is more to it.

Jesus said we should bear fruit that others can see, but we don't bear fruit to be "seen." We shouldn't look for big, outward actions that can get us attention. Insincerity can be spotted a mile away. Instead, we should develop who we are as Christians, as people with deep character, and this fruit won't go unnoticed.

Seven points to ponder about joy:

One. Worldly joy doesn't last. One minute we're flying high, at the top of the roller coaster. The next, we're plummeting down.

Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? (Job 20:4-5)

Two. In the Old Testament, joy was associated with the true worship of God. Whenever people know, love, and worship God, He instills a joy that only he can give.

When the Hebrews returned from the Babylonian captivity, one of the first things they did was to start rebuilding the temple. Solomon's temple had been destroyed seventy years earlier. The people gathered together to witness the foundations being laid. Some wept for joy, and others wept because the second temple would not match the splendor of the one Solomon built. Their cries were great, and no one could tell whether if they were of joy or sorrow (Ezra 3:8-13).

Another story in the Old Testament shows joy. Good King Hezekiah rededicated the nation of Israel to God. He arranged for a tremendous feast to be held at their religious holiday of Passover. Notice what is said of joy on this occasion:

So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem (2 Chr. 30:26)

The people's renewed commitment to God reignited the joy in their hearts.

Three. Joy is a gift. Of course, joy is one of the fruits of the spirit, one of the evidences that we are living a Christian life. Also note what is said in Romans 14:17: *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

Four. Doing the will of God can increase our joy. Many Christians can attest to this.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (2 Cor. 1:24)

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Php. 2:1-2)

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy. (1 Thess. 2:19-20)

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 John 1:3-4)

Five. Circumstances cannot take away true joy. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:10, “...as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing...” This means even when we are in a situation that legitimately brings sorrow, our inner joy cannot be taken away. We can still rejoice in that we are forgiven, and that we enjoy a relationship with Jesus Christ. Our joy is strengthened when we remember God is with us and that He is our shepherd.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. (Jas. 1:2-3)

Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. (Php. 2:17)

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:13)

Six. Sin can steal our joy. Sin damages our relationship with God, and can destroy the source of our joy.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (Jas. 4:6-10)

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto

the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Eph. 4:28-32)

Joy is a gift from the Holy Spirit, and when we “quench the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19) by living apart from God, we stop the flow of joy from God. This is cause to wake up and take notice: if we are experiencing less and less joy, then we need to make sure we examine our lives and make sure we are living as we should.

Seven. We should “rejoice evermore.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, “*Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*” The will of God in Christ Jesus for you involves rejoicing, prayer, and giving thanks. This verse is simple, but profound. Here are instructions for us for our everyday lives: be thankful, pray, and rejoice. No matter what!

As a fruit of the Spirit, to have joy is to be confident in God’s strength and comfort no matter where life takes us. If our relationship with Christ is right, if we confess our sins, if we are prayerful and if we are thankful, then we will experience joy in good times and in bad.

CHAD PRINCE
(Oxford, AL)

**Happiness can be thought, taught,
and caught, but not bought.**

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: What are the pricks spoken of in Acts 9:5?

ANSWER: “*And he [Saul] said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*” (Acts 9:5). This expression is repeated in Acts 26:14 where Paul recalls his conversion and recounts it before King Agrippa.

Strong's Greek dictionary (2759) explains prick as “To prick...a point...i.e. a sting...or goad.” In Hebrew Strong's (4451) explains this to refer to the effect of a goad normally used on oxen. Note the expression in Judges 3:31, “*And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: And he also delivered Israel.*”

Another Hebrew usage is explained by Strong's [1861] as “goad, to prick.”

Of this usage 1 Samuel 13:21 records, “*Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulter, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.*” Coulters is explained by Strong's [855], as a hoe or other digging instrument.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. (Eccl. 12:11)

A goad, then, is an instrument used to prick, as a stick to prod

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221* Email: raymcmamus@hotmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

oxen. It would be hard for an ox to kick against the prick inflicted by the goad; he must suffer the prick of the goad and respond in obedience to his master.

Likewise, Saul would find it difficult to resist the pricks or stings inflicted by Jesus in attempting to gain the submission of Saul to the will of God.

HARRY COBB
(Deceased)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. On which day of creation did God create light?
2. Who was King Ahab's wife?
3. Under whose reign was Daniel thrown into the lions' den?
4. What was the title that Pilate wrote on Jesus' cross?
5. According to Jude, who disputed with the devil about the body of Moses?

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What kind of animal was killed for the Passover? LAMB (Exodus 12:3-11)
2. What country was Ruth from? MOAB (Ruth 1:4)
3. Which son of Saul was David's friend? JONATHAN (1 Samuel 19:2)
4. Which minor prophet wrote concerning the destruction of Nineveh? NAHUM (Nahum 1:1)
5. Which two prophets did Peter see speaking with Jesus? MOSES AND ELIJAH (Luke 9:28-33)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
June 5 - 8	Ashlock Burkesville, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 5 - 10	Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
June 10 - 12	Liberty Liberty, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 11 - 12	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & Tim Lewis
Jun 12 - 17	Mt. Carmel Woodland, AL	Bill Prince, Jr. (Oxford, AL)
June 13 - 17	Freefield State Line, MS	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & Tim Lewis
June 16 - 19	Junction City Junction City, KY	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)
June 19 - 24	Ephesus Ephesus, GA	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 23 - 24	Fellowship Conference Oxford Civic Center Oxford, AL	Various Speakers
June 24 - 26	Antioch Douglasville, GA	Ron Scott (Bloomington, IN)
