

Worship:

*I am a friend of God – Israel Houghton:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUn5H6N2xa4>

*At Your name – Phil Whickam* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il-bJjeiOhY>

*The Stand – Hillsong United* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vs60Jmrnf9w>

OK – This may seem like a long one with lots of scriptures etc, but stick with it – it's going to be worth it!

## Joy inexpressible and full of glory

The word JOY appears 242 times in the bible. Joy is important to God – His plan and desire is that we are a Joyful people.

### **John 10**

*<sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

### **Galatians 5:22**

*<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

The world is desperately looking for real Joy but unfortunately looking for the wrong things – money, fame, how we look, acceptance, power – the list goes on and on ..... just like the prodigal son who left home looking for what he thought would make him happy – “The God of this age has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers”

### **Job 20:5**

*the mirth of the wicked is brief, the **joy** of the godless lasts but a moment.*

## The Benefits of a Joyful Heart

### **1. Joy Heals – It feels good**

### **Proverbs 17:22**

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones*

Laughter and Health – Wikipedia:

A link between laughter and healthy function of blood vessels was first reported in 2005 by researchers at the University of Maryland Medical Center with the fact that laughter causes the dilatation of the inner lining of blood vessels, the *endothelium*, and increases blood flow.<sup>[8]</sup> Drs. Michael Miller (University of Maryland) and William Fry (Stanford), theorize that beta-endorphin like compounds released by the hypothalamus activate

receptors on the endothelial surface to release nitric oxide, thereby resulting in dilation of vessels. Other cardioprotective properties of nitric oxide include reduction of inflammation and decreased platelet aggregation

So, there we have it – the world has eventually managed to work out that laughter has healing qualities .... If they'd only read the book of Proverbs, written nearly 3000 years earlier – Ha ha!

## 2. Joy Strengthens and SUSTAINS

### **Nehemiah 8:10**

*Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

Nehemiah had set out to do great things with God and encountered fierce opposition – yet the Joy of knowing God, being called according to His purpose and having faith in Him gave Nehemiah great Joy.

Similarly, as we all go through such a tough period in world history, we need the Joy of the Lord to be our strength. Joy is not circumstantial but rather an inner miracle of happiness brought about by faith in our great God!

Our JOY testifies to the hope we have in Jesus – When the hopeless orphans of the world see our Joy they see Jesus in us and desire Him!

## How do we receive HIS Joy?

### 1. The Joy of Salvation (and the Joy of repentance)

Psalm 51:12-13

*12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.  
13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will turn back to you.*

Psalm 32:1-2

*1 Blessed(happy) is he  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.*

Knowing Jesus has forgiven and washed you clean, wiping out the stain of your sin for all eternity brings about an incredible JOY – There is nothing like that feeling of purity and righteousness after we have lived in the shame and the guilt. The only addition to the joy of your own salvation is the joy of another's salvation in leading people to Christ!

Isaiah 12:3

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Maybe ask the Holy Spirit for miraculous (pandemic / lockdown) opportunities to share Jesus with someone this week?

## 2. The Joy of Breakthrough - Victory

Psalm 21:1

*O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his **joy** in the victories you give!*

Psalm 30:5

*Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy comes in the morning.*

Psalm 30:11

*You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,*

I particularly love the "Joy comes in the morning" part! ... Our Joy is heavily connected to our Hope! We have a Hope – We know the end of the story, We know the Father of all creation – the Great Victorious Warrior, We're going to be more than fine!! Ha ha!

## 3. The Joy of trials and difficulties

James 1:2

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

We have to keep seeing that which is of eternal worth, keeping our eyes fixed on the prize like a training athlete.

In faith – sing and shout for joy, praise God even in the tough times:

## 4. The Joy of the Holy Spirit

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit ... When we ask Him to fill us afresh we receive a new measure of His Joy!

Sarah and I were once prayed for in a meeting, not long after we'd been married and the Joy we received was so strong we went home and laughed for an entire day – having no idea what was going on until we had a chance later to try to make sense of it all ... It really was a healing, uplifting and restoring gift from the Holy Spirit!

## 5. The Joy of Holiness / Obedience

**John 15**

*"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

**Psalm 19:8**

*The precepts of the LORD are right, giving **joy** to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*

**Hebrews 1:9**

*You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."*

Joy comes from doing what we know to be right by God. Jesus was set above all men because of His holiness and was anointed with the oil of JOY!

## 6. Joy is a command

Pretty good rule to live by – Be Joyful and glad.....

Psalm 100

- 1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.
- 3 Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his ;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.
- 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

*Be joyful always;*

In the words of NIKE - "JUST DO IT!" - go for Joy, choose Joy, Be Joyful always!

## 7. Joy is contagious and attractive

Proverbs 15:30

*A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.*

We should aim to bring joy to **each other** – a kind word, a cheerful look, a surprise call laden with God's Joy.

## 8. Joy comes from just knowing Jesus

1 Peter 1:8

*Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,*

### Prayer:

Holy Spirit this week we ask for a fresh filling of Your Joy – The Joy of knowing You, living for you, experiencing Your presence! You are amazing! Fill us with Your Spirit – Amen.

Ending Song (Couldn't help myself ! haha! ... Enjoy)

*SAVED – Lindell Cooley*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcjuC016c68>

