



Helping Kids Choose Joy God's Way

When Happiness Fades, But Joy Remains

Raising Christ-Centered Kids | Character | The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

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“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4, *ESV*)

Key Takeaway

Joy comes from knowing God loves us no matter what.

The Biblical Meaning of Joy

Joy isn't the same as happiness. Happiness depends on good things happening, but joy is deeper. It comes from knowing God and trusting that He is good, even when life feels hard. The Bible says, “*The joy of the LORD is your strength*” (Nehemiah 8:10, *ESV*). Joy gives us courage and hope when we feel weak. It reminds us that God is still in control and that His love never changes.

Jesus said, “*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*” (John 15:11, *ESV*). When we stay close to Jesus, His joy fills our hearts and overflows to others. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), showing that God's life is growing inside us.

Joy is a gift from God. Happiness comes and goes, but God's joy stays forever. No matter what happens, we can always have His joy when we choose to rest in His love.

Understanding Joy: When Life Feels Disappointing

Everyone has moments when things go wrong. A friend might say something hurtful, a plan might fall apart, or you might lose a game you really wanted to win. It's easy to feel sad or frustrated when life doesn't go our way. But joy reminds us that even when things are tough, God's love hasn't gone anywhere.



Parent Guide | *The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy*

Happiness is like a bubble—it floats for a while and then pops. Joy is more like a brick—it’s strong, steady, and helps you stand firm when life gets shaky. Happiness fades when fun moments end, but joy lasts because it’s built on God’s love.

Joy doesn’t mean pretending to be happy all the time. Even Jesus felt sad, but He never stopped trusting His Father’s love. When we remember that God is close and still cares for us, our hearts begin to feel lighter. Gratitude grows when we thank Him for what we still have, and trust grows when we believe He can bring something good from what hurts.

Joy doesn’t erase sadness—it helps us move through it with hope. When we notice little signs of God’s goodness, like a kind friend, a hug, or a bright morning, we see that joy isn’t about everything being perfect. It’s about knowing a perfect God who stays with us through everything.

Practical Steps: Experiencing Lasting Joy with God’s Help

1. **Start with Gratitude** – Each morning, name three blessings you thank God for.
2. **Sing a Praise Song** – Worship helps your heart focus on God’s goodness.
3. **Find Joy in Giving** – Make or share something that blesses someone else.
4. **Look for God’s Presence** – Notice His love in people, creation, and answered prayers.
5. **Smile on Purpose** – Sometimes joy grows when we choose to show it.

Scripture for Parents and Kids

- “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11, *ESV*)
- “The joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10, *ESV*)
- “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11, *ESV*)

Encouragement for Parents

Joy doesn’t come from perfect days—it comes from knowing a perfect Savior who never leaves us. Help your child see that joy grows when we stay close to Jesus and remember His goodness in every part of life.

Celebrate joyful moments together, like laughter at the dinner table, kindness between siblings, or answered prayers, and point them back to God as the source. When your child feels discouraged, remind them that Jesus understands every feeling and wants to share His joy with them.

Your calm gratitude and steady faith will show your child what true joy looks like in daily life. As you rejoice in the Lord together, His joy will fill your home with peace and hope.

CTMP Corner: Kingdom Kids in Action

- **Connect:** Share a time when you found joy in a hard situation.
- **Teach:** Joy comes from Jesus, not from things.
- **Model:** Create a “Joy Jar” and add blessings or praises each day.
- **Pray:** Thank God for His presence that brings lasting joy.