

Renewing Your Joy

- Ron Stullenbarger -

For most of us, true joy has been crowded out by the pressures and cares of responsibility. Joy becomes contingent upon the circumstances of our lives. Most of us feel the pressure of finances, work, relationships, and even serving God consistently to the point that joy is a pursuit we've almost given up on. But God has a message and a plan for you for a renewal of consistent and unshakable joy.

Our joy is not to be of this world, but of God. Psalm 16:11 says, *"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* The fullness of joy will only be found in God's presence, and the Bible tells us that God's presence is everywhere! (Psalm 139:7-10) Because God is everywhere and in His presence is fullness of joy, joy is available to you 24/7. And Scripture teaches us in Romans 14:17 that *"The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."* God's lordship in our lives is all about *"righteousness and peace and joy."* Our heavenly Father desires to bring about those incredible fruits of the Spirit in you today. He has a plan to lead you to perfect, unshakable joy. But in order to receive the incredible gift God wants to give you today, you will have to make a choice to place your hope and trust in Him.

Scripture tells us that our joy is to be wholeheartedly found in God and not in the world. The joy our heavenly Father longs to bring us is meant to transcend anything this world could ever do to us. But in order for God's desire to come to fruition in our lives, we have to place our hope and trust solely in Him. Psalm 33:21 says, *"Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name."* Romans 15:13 says, *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."* What we place our trust and belief in becomes the rudder that guides our emotions. If you place your trust in your job, people, or finances, you are building a foundation for your joy that can be crushed at a moment's notice. But if you will choose to place your trust and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have a sure foundation unshakable by any trial or circumstance that comes your way. In fact, those very trials that had the power to destroy your joy will, in God, become yet another source of it.

James 1:2-4 says, *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* When you place your hope and trust in God, your eyes will be opened to see the incredible work He is doing in you through any and every circumstance. Whether you have success in this life or not, you will have joy -- because your life will be wholly lived with your relationship with God as first priority.

When your faith and hope are in God, the circumstances of your job and relationships won't have the power to shake your joy and satisfaction any longer. You see, God's plan to is to redeem your life totally and completely. God's plan is to renew your joy every morning as you place your hope and trust in Him alone.