

Dig Deeper Devotional



The JOY Store: Stop Chasing the Next Thing

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You have blessed us with more conveniences, opportunities, and possessions than we could ever have imagined. None of them can satisfy the deepest needs of the heart. Forgive me when I confuse temporary happiness with lasting joy or allow the pursuit of the next thing to distract me from what You have already given. Teach me to find joy in Your presence. Lead me along Your path so that my joy rests securely in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Foundation

NIV — Psalm 16:11

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

KJV — Psalm 16:11

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Teaching & Insight

We live in an extraordinary age. A device small enough to fit in our pocket can place enormous amounts of information at our fingertips. Technology has given us conveniences that previous generations could scarcely have imagined. Greater convenience has not eliminated dissatisfaction. There always seems to be something else promising to make life better: the next best thing. We obtain what we want, enjoy it for a while, and eventually discover another “next thing.” The danger begins when we ask temporary things to provide something they were never designed to give.

This is where the distinction between **happiness and joy** becomes important. Happiness is often connected to what is happening around us. When circumstances improve, happiness rises; when circumstances deteriorate, happiness can disappear just as quickly. Biblical joy reaches deeper because its foundation is not merely circumstantial. Its source is God.

Galatians 5:22 identifies joy as part of the fruit of the Spirit. Christian joy is therefore not positive thinking or an unusually cheerful personality. It develops as the Holy Spirit works within the believer. This explains how joy can remain present even when happiness temporarily disappears. James makes this distinction particularly clear when he writes, “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds*” (James 1:2, NIV). He is not telling believers to enjoy suffering or pretend that painful circumstances are pleasant. Rather, trials do not possess the authority to destroy our deepest source of joy because our relationship with God remains secure even when life becomes difficult.

Psalms 16:11 points us toward that source: “*You will fill me with joy in your presence.*”

Joy is found in God's presence, not in an endless pursuit of better circumstances.

Five elements can help us make that transition: **Perspective, Priorities, Purpose, Patience, and Prayer.**

Perspective: See Beyond the Present

Joy begins with an eternal perspective. Our present circumstances matter, but they are not the whole story. Success is temporary. Possessions eventually wear out. Difficult seasons also pass. For the believer, even death does not have the final word. An eternal perspective does not cause us to ignore today's responsibilities; it helps us place them in their proper proportion. When eternity becomes the horizon through which we view life, temporary disappointments lose some of their power while eternal priorities become clearer.

Priorities: Decide What Deserves Your Life

Once our perspective changes, our priorities should follow. Every person has limited time, energy, attention, and resources. How we use them reveals what we consider valuable. The pursuit of happiness continually tells us that satisfaction lies somewhere ahead: one more achievement, possession, experience, or improvement. Joy teaches us to receive God's gifts gratefully without making them the center of our lives. Jesus taught His followers to “*seek first his kingdom and his righteousness*” (Matthew 6:33, NIV). The question is not whether we may enjoy earthly blessings, but whether those blessings remain beneath our greater pursuit of God.

Purpose: Know Why You Are Here

Purpose is larger than occupation. A job may change, children grow, responsibilities shift, and abilities develop differently across the seasons of life. Our fundamental calling, however, remains rooted in belonging to Christ and faithfully using what God has entrusted to us. Instead of asking, *What do I want to accomplish?*, believers should ask, *God, what do You want to accomplish through me?*

Purpose brings stability because it moves life away from endless consumption and toward faithful stewardship. We stop measuring life primarily by what we acquire and begin considering what we contribute for God's glory.

Patience: Trust the Curves in the Road

Purpose does not mean God's direction will always be obvious. Sometimes the path curves. Plans change, doors close, opportunities are delayed, and seasons last longer than expected. Patience becomes essential because we often want God to reveal the entire journey when He has shown us only the next faithful step. Psalm 16 says that God makes known “*the path of life.*” Following that path requires trusting the One who sees beyond the curve. Joy grows when we stop demanding that God operate according to our preferred schedule and learn to trust His wisdom with what we cannot yet see.

Prayer: Stay Connected to the Source

The final element connects everything else. Prayer keeps our perspective anchored, priorities examined, purpose submitted, and patience strengthened. Because the Holy Spirit indwells believers, we do not navigate life by human wisdom alone. We can continually seek God's direction through Scripture and prayer, asking Him to expose misplaced desires and guide us toward what carries eternal value.

Romans 15:13 captures this beautifully:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Notice where joy originates: God fills; We trust; The Holy Spirit empowers. Follow the One in whose presence there is fullness of joy.

DEED / ACTION

This week, complete a JOY Check using the five principles of Perspective, Priorities, Purpose, Patience, and Prayer.

Step 1: Check Your Perspective

Identify one current concern that feels enormous. Ask how viewing it from an eternal perspective changes its importance or your response to it.

Step 2: Examine Your Priorities

Review where your time, money, and attention are going. Choose one practical adjustment that places God's priorities more clearly ahead of temporary pursuits.

Step 3: Revisit Your Purpose

Ask God where He wants to use your abilities, experiences, resources, and relationships for His purposes during this season of life.

Step 4: Practice Patience and Prayer

Identify one situation you are trying to rush. Pray about it daily this week, asking the Holy Spirit for direction rather than demanding your preferred timetable.

Pause & Reflect

- What “next thing” have I convinced myself makes me satisfied?
- What currently receives greater priority than it deserves?
- Have I asked God what He wants to accomplish through this season of my life?
- Am I pursuing happiness from God's gifts more than joy in God's presence?

One final question: Am I asking God to give me what I think will make me happy, or am I trusting Him to lead me toward what produces lasting joy?

Hebrew Insight

הֵנָּחַשׁ (*Simhâ / Simchah*) — “Joy, gladness, rejoicing”

Simchah describes joy or gladness and frequently appears in the Old Testament in connection with God's presence, worship, salvation, and blessing. Biblical joy is therefore more substantial than momentary pleasure.

Psalms 16:11 connects this joy directly with God: “*In your presence is fullness of joy.*” The deepest joy is not discovered by accumulating enough good circumstances but through relationship with the God from whom every lasting good ultimately comes.

Greek Insight

χαρά (*Chara*) — “Joy, gladness, delight”

Chara is the Greek word translated “**joy**” in Galatians 5:22, where Paul identifies it as part of the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit. This matters because Christian joy is not something believers must manufacture through emotional effort. As we remain surrendered to Christ and responsive to the Spirit, joy increasingly becomes part of the character He produces within us.

Happiness may respond to what happens around us; Spirit-produced joy grows from what God is doing within us.

Closing Prayer

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 15:13

God of hope,

Fill me with the joy that comes from knowing You. When temporary things compete for my attention, remind me that lasting joy is found in Your presence. Fill me also with Your peace as I trust You. When the path changes, plans are delayed, or circumstances become difficult, it strengthens my confidence that Your wisdom reaches beyond what I can presently see. May the joy You produce within me become visible to others, not because every circumstance is easy, but because my confidence rests in the God whose promises extend beyond this life and into eternity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Charge

The world will always offer another “next thing” and promise that satisfaction is just one purchase, achievement, experience, or improvement away. Enjoy God's blessings gratefully, but never ask temporary gifts to provide eternal joy.

Change the question from “What do I need next?” to “Where is God leading me next?” Then follow His path with perspective, priorities, purpose, patience, and prayer—trusting the Holy Spirit to produce a joy that circumstances cannot provide and difficulties cannot take away.

Sources

- The Holy Bible
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
- **Mondays With Mark Video Series — LifeMark Ministries**