

Learn

GALATIANS 5:22-23 (NIV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

JOHN 2:1-11 (NIV)

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." ⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." ¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

HEBREWS 12:2

...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Main Idea

We serve a God who is full of joy! Interestingly, Jesus demonstrates this when He started His ministry by making a party better. And it was not just any party, but one of the most joyous celebrations we share – a wedding party. His first miracle of turning water into wine points to the joyful celebration that lies ahead at the wedding supper of the Lamb with His bride– the church.

If God is full of joy, the question for us is: how can we also experience the joy of Christ in our lives? As we see in Galatians 5:22-23, joy is something God produces in us by His Spirit. What is so amazing about the joy God gives us is that it is different than happiness. The root word of happiness is "hap" which means "change" or "good luck". In other words, happiness is related to our circumstances. When things go well, we're happy. When they don't, we're sad. This is where joy stands apart. The joy of God is something we see time and time again in Scripture as something we can have even in difficult circumstances of life (see 2 Corinthians 6:10, James 1:2-4). Unlike happiness, joy is not based on circumstances. It's based on delighting in God for the sheer beauty and worth that He is, which produces in us contentment, confidence, hope, and—well...joy.

So, how can we have joy in the midst of suffering? Hebrews 12:2 tells us that when we face difficulties to look at the example of Jesus, “who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross...” This joy came from believing the truth and keeping His eyes on the eternal prize. Paul also tells us this clearly in Romans 15:13; “Now may the God of hope, fill you with all joy and peace, in believing that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Think...

1. What comes to mind if you picture God as joyful? In Zephaniah 3:17 it says, “He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.”(NASB) Wow. Can you picture God shouting over you with shouts of joy? Why or why not?
2. What is the significance of Jesus choosing a wedding to perform His first miracle?
3. What is the difference between joy and happiness?
4. Why is it important to distinguish joy from happiness?

Discuss...

1. We are called to a higher standard of love – God’s standard. How can we grow in a love that let’s us, “lay down our lives for our friends”, or to “love our enemies”, or to “forgive one another from the heart”?
2. Explain your reaction to the following statement: We can only love as much as we’ve been loved.

Next Steps

We have learned that our faith is linked to our experiencing joy in the Holy Spirit. Consider making a list of things you have learned about God, His character, and His promises toward you. Ask God to help you to see Him and His promises each and every day no matter what circumstances you may face. As you do, think of what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4 – “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.” By faith, choose joy today.