

The Second Fruit of the Spirit (Go To Meeting)

Lindsay Stephens—January 13, 2024

As we all know, we live in a world that has been turned upside down by all the problems surrounding us. So many things have happened in our society, such as broken marriages, crimes of all types, broken promises by governments, and massive debt.

On the international scene, we live in the time when there are wars and rumors of wars, which has been prophesied. So, we do not live in a happy society today. People do not want God to be involved in their lives. They do not see any connection with God and any purpose in their lives.

With this in mind, it is such a blessing for us to be called into the Church of the Firstborn, to have such tremendous insight into God's Plan and to have a measure of His Spirit.

Today I intend to discuss one of the fruits of God's Spirit, which is the second one mentioned in Gal. 5, what it means to us and its importance in our lives. This fruit is **joy!**

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23).

What exactly is joy? In Greek, the word for joy is 'chara.' This describes a *feeling of inner gladness, delight, or rejoicing!* It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart, which in turn leads to a cheerful behavior.

Another Greek word closely related to 'chara' is 'charis,' which means *grace or a gift!* The two are closely linked because 'chara' is the natural response to 'charis.'

In other words, we have joy because of God's grace. We are choosing to live a life filled with the joy God promises when we choose to value His presence, promises and plans for our lives.

Joy in a Biblical sense is choosing to respond to external circumstances with inner contentment and satisfaction, because we know that God will use these experiences to accomplish His works through our lives.

It is a subtle assurance that God is in control of all the details in our lives, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.

There is a large difference between joy and happiness. You might be happy about something, but it doesn't last. It is an emotion that reacts.

It is not God's intention for us to be in an emotional state all the time. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance (Ecc. 3:4).

Why is joy an important fruit of the Holy Spirit? Joy is more than a temporary happiness. It is everlasting and is more than simply an emotional reaction to our circumstances. It is an active choice of attitude. As followers of Christ, *we rejoice because we:*

- have redemption by His blood
- having been called by God the Father
- having our mind open to His Plan through the Sabbath and Holy Days
- having repented and been baptized and been put into the Body of Christ

This is a permanent journey to perfection, not just some temporary emotional euphoria. Happiness is of the moment. The Bible speaks more of joy than of being happy.

'Hap' is a root word that means *chance, luck or fortune!* Other words from 'hap' include *happen, happening, haphazard,* which is dependent on mere chance. and happy. Happiness is a glad feeling that depends on something good happening.

God wants us to experience happiness, providing He approves of what is happening. But His greater desire is that we have unconditional joy.

Biblical joy, the true joy, comes from the spiritual void with good relationships, primarily an intimate relationship with the One Who is pure joy.

John 15:5: "I [Christ] am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing."

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples.... [Why is that?] ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love" (vs 8-9).

Love is the first fruit of the Spirit. As the love chapter (1-Cor. 13) says, we can be able to do so much, but ***IF*** we don't have love we are nothing.

Verse 10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My

Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and that your joy may be full" (vs 10-11). So, **joy** is the second fruit of the Spirit.

John 16:22: "And likewise, you indeed have grief now, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one shall take your joy from you."

Jesus spoke this at the time when He knew that He was about to be betrayed and crucified. The joy is a settled state of mind and heart, which is produced by the Holy Spirit being the second fruit.

It results in contentment and hope-filled confidence in God's Plan and promises. **It is a settled state**, not a passing feeling of mind and heart or an emotional euphoria. **Joy is produced by the Spirit**, not cramped up within or prompted by favorable circumstances.

Joyful people are relentlessly positive because of their understanding of God's Plan and His purpose for each one of us in His Plan of Salvation.

Let's look at Romans which connects joy to our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is peace of mind and this peace is not a subjective feeling but an objective reality!

Verse 2: "Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 2-5).

Here we have a process in our progression of conversion by the trials that we go through. Verse 4 describes the steps taken and verse 3 expresses that we boast in these tribulations.

An example of joy in adverse circumstances occurs in the Book of Acts involving Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:16: "Now, it came to pass that as we were going to prayer, a certain damsel who had a spirit of Python met us... [an evil spirit] ...and she brought her masters much gain by divining. She followed Paul and us and cried out, saying, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, and are

preaching to us *the* way of salvation.' Now, she did this for many days. Then Paul, being grieved, turned to the spirit and said, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out the same hour" (vs 16-18).

When the name of Jesus Christ is used, any evil spirit has to obey. But here is the result of this:

Verse 19: "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold of Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace before the magistrates."

So, they were losing money out of this intervention, so they thought in terms of what's in it for us.

Verse 20: "And they brought them to the captains, saying, 'These men, who are Jews, are greatly troubling our city, and are preaching customs that are not lawful for us, as Romans, to receive or to practice.'" (vs 20-21). *And we see the reaction to this accusation:*

Verse 22: "Then a multitude rose up against them, and the captains tore off their garments, and commanded *that they* be beaten with rods. And after laying many stripes on them, they cast *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them safely. After receiving this command, he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks" (vs 22-24).

- Can we put ourselves in that situation?
- Being mercilessly beaten after being given a hostile reception?

Not only were they put into prison after the flogging, but they also had their feet put into stocks. Physically, it was a no-win situation. But look at the response of these prisoners:

Verse 25: "But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

So, Paul and Silas were expressing great joy with the assurance of knowing that God had a great plan for them despite the circumstances. This transcends far beyond the current trials that they were experiencing, and they were a fine example to the other prisoners.

Verse 26: "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so *great* that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed."

We see the conversion of the jailer and his household. God has a way of working things out.

One point to emphasize about *joy* is that it looks outward and upward, but not inward. It's not a selfish attitude, because joy comes much more from giving and serving than from getting.

In order to grow and develop in this *second fruit of the Spirit*, we must resist not only self-pity, but also being self-centered and self-absorbed.

For *joy* to flourish in our lives, we need to focus on loving others, especially on loving God the Father and on Jesus Christ. Jesus emphasized this just prior to His trial and crucifixion.

John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another."

Love is the first fruit of the Spirit, but we can't have *joy* if we don't have *love*.

Verse 35: "By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another."

So, *a major ingredient of joy is gratitude*, and this is gratitude for all the wonderful things that God has done for us. An example of this can be found in:

1-Peter 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead." *That is eternal life and being in the God Family!*

Verse 4: "Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us."

There is nothing greater in this world than having the Truth of God and the understanding of His Plan. Joy should be a major part of our fellowship with one another in the Church.

Malachi 3:16: "Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a **Book of Remembrance** was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name." *That is the Book of Life!*

They were respecting, loving, and joyful about God, His plan and His way. God is very interested in our fellowship. This includes how we converse with one another, how we communicate, how we encourage one another, and any way to help us to grow in God's grace, love, and joy.

Verse 17: "'And they shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'in the day that I will make up My own special jewels.... [we are God's jewels]

...And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.'"

We can think of the joy between Elizabeth and Mary with what God revealed to them when Mary stayed with Elizabeth during their pregnancies. That's just one example. Think of the joy of the apostles once they knew that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, and so much of God's Plan had opened up to them. *Being grateful for what God has done for us produces joy!* Let's look at some instructions from Paul:

1-Thessalonians 5:16: "Rejoice always! Pray unceasingly. Give thanks in everything, for this *is* the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (vs 16-18).

That is in everything. Rejoice in everything in all circumstances. Our gratitude should be for other people's blessings as well as their own (Rom. 12:15). God wants us to reap the blessings of His calling.

We can try the simple mathematical equation of addition and subtraction.

On the addition side, we have:

- gratitude
- humility
- forgiveness
- faith
- hope
- patience
- love

On the negative side, we have:

- resentment
- fear
- anger
- anxiety
- greed
- materialism
- jealousy
- complaint
- pride

The result of this equation, when you look at it on the positive side, is joy!

The world's version of Christianity, many people think the God of the Old Testament as being harsh, cruel and eager to punish anyone who sins. But there are many Scriptures that depict a God of love and joy to those who please Him.

Proverbs 23:24: "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise *child* shall have joy from him."

From the parent's perspective, we would want our children to make right choices in life and avoid all the pitfalls out in the world. Think of how God feels when we make the right choices and follow Him and keep His Laws.

Psalm 68:3: "But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing to God, sing praises to His name; extol Him who rides upon the clouds Whose name is the LORD, and rejoice before Him" (vs 3-4).

If we follow God the Father and Jesus Christ, we will also be joyful. At the other end of the scale, we have been given a warning in:

Deuteronomy 28:47: "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all *things*."

Well all the cursings have been mentioned throughout the chapter for us. But an example of this is when the twelve men came back from spying out the 'promised land' in Num. 13. Ten of them, apart from Joshua and Caleb, gave an evil report, which the people believed. Because they were not joyful of the land that they were to inherit, God delayed Israel from entering this land for another 38 years, as mentioned in Num. 14. ***God was certainly not pleased!***

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23).

When Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit joy is listed second, preceded only by love. Why is that? *If we are filled with Godly love, it will automatically produce joy!*

There are seven more fruits of the Spirit mentioned after that. If we have joy, it will be far easier to apply the other seven in our lives if we have love and joy.

Some religious people out in the world think that joy is not spiritually important. They even shun joy, at least subconsciously, thinking that pious people should instead be solemn. Some people even choose asceticism, which is not at all pleasing to God. Joy is a major theme in the Word of God.

In the *King James Version*, joy appears 158 times and rejoice 198 times. This is not counting the other variations such as joyful, joyfully, joyous, jubilant, happy and glad. The verb form of joy is to rejoice, meaning to feel or have joy.

In the Scripture, there is great emphasis on feeling and expressing joy. That explains why God's

Word also emphasizes prayer and psalms that praise God.

Colossians 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him" (vs 16-17).

- that's complete conversion
- that is full of joy

We are repeatedly commanded to rejoice. Joy is not an option. Paul commands it in Philippians:

Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

That is a command. We saw from the earlier examples of Paul and Silas, God's joy continues to flow through His people even during their sufferings because of having hope for the future.

We know that all trials we go through and all the suffering is limited to this life, which is very short compared to eternity. That time will soon come when it says in:

Revelation 21:4: "...*there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying..."

We know that it's hard to do when trials happen unexpectedly, but we have good reason to rejoice because of our trials when we understand how God is using these trials to help us build Godly character.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose."

Paul describes what we are to go through in times of trials and suffering (Rom. 5:1-5). So, having the right attitude through trials brings character. James also writes along these lines.

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.... [there is a reason why we have trials] ...But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything" (vs 2-4). *This is speaking spiritually!*

Because Christ suffered for each one of us, we should have a special joy when we are persecuted for our faith. This is what Jesus says in the beatitudes:

Matthew 5:10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for

theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake” (vs 10-11)—*will persecute you or despise you!*

As time goes on and things deteriorate in this world, we are warned that this is going to happen more and more. We need to be ready for such a time.

Verse 12: “Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you.”

It’s happened all down through history. When Stephen was on trial before the Sanhedrin, he asked them:

Acts 7: 52: “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?....”

The number one key to joy is having God’s Spirit. Supreme joy is God’s nature and character. We see the evidence of this everywhere in God’s creation all around us. We can observe the spectacular scenery of mountains, waterfalls, seascapes, animals and birds, flowers and trees, looking at the stars at night gives us an indication of God’s greatness.

If we see photos from the James Webb telescope to give some indication of how far the known universe goes, how joyful should we be knowing that God wants us to have a part in that in the future?

To exercise joy in a profitable way that God wants from us, we need to have the right attitude. We are certainly not to rely on physical things. Paul says this in:

1-Timothy 6:17: “Charge those who are rich in this present age not to be high-minded, nor to put *their* hope in *the* uncertainty of riches; but to *put their hope* in the living God, Who abundantly gives us all things for *our* enjoyment.”

Temporary riches can just collapse in an instant and it’s going to happen in the future at some time. Now let’s turn to a passage in Acts to see how the disciples reacted to some adverse circumstances.

This was after Paul and Barnabas were rejected by the Jews:

Acts 13 46: “...we turn to the Gentiles; for so the Lord has enjoined *upon* us: “I have set You for a light of *the* Gentiles that You should be for salvation unto *the* uttermost parts of the earth”” (vs 46-47).

Verse 48: “And when the Gentiles heard

this, they rejoiced; and they glorified the Word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the Word of the Lord was carried throughout the entire country” (vs 48-49).

This was at the time when the Jews as a whole were rejecting the Gospel of Jesus as the Messiah and the Word of God. At the same time, Gentiles were responding with joy.

Verse 50: “But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the principal men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders.”

Even after this persecution, they were filled with joy knowing that they were fulfilling God’s will in spreading the Gospel. We have joy because Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

Jesus tells us to rejoice for a specific reason.

Luke 10:19: “Behold, I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you in any way. Yet, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (vs 19-20).

When you say ‘spirits of serpents and scorpions’ it reflects the character of those under Satan’s influence. ***Our rejoicing should be that we are called by God the Father and that our names are written in the Book of Life!***

Verse 21: “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You did hide these things from *the* wise and intelligent, and did reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do* so.”

Think of the powerful, the elite, the wealthy and those who have control of how things go in this world.

God the Father and Jesus Christ are well pleased and do rejoice in our calling.

Verse 22: “Then He turned to the disciples *and* said, ‘All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows Who the Son is, except the Father; and Who the Father is, except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*.’”

From the very beginning it’s been a joint operation and an intimate relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. While we are commanded to have joy in our lives, is it wrong to have sorrow? *There are two types of sorrow described in:*

2-Corinthians 7:10: “For sorrow unto repentance before God works out salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works out death.”

Those who have joy can frequently experience Godly sorrow at the same time. It can be the sorrow of repentance towards God. Those who feel the worst about their sin feel the greatest joy about their forgiveness and God’s grace towards them.

Another example is mourning over the suffering of others while having the joy of knowing that God will eventually solve all problems in His time.

On the other hand, worldly sorrow is generally self-pity or a victim mentality. While one indulges in worldly sorrow, it’s virtually impossible to have either Godly joy or sorrow. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be a Man of sorrows (Isa. 53:3).

Yet, He was also prophesied to be ‘anointed with the oil of gladness’ above or more than His companions (Heb. 1:8-9 & Psa. 45:6-7).

Indeed, Christ had great joy and also experienced great sorrow (John 17:13 & Matt. 26:37-39).

Grieving is a healthy response when a loved one dies. However, if we believe in the Truth of the resurrection, we also have the comfort of joy, because we know our loss is only temporary.

The grief is much more painful for those who have no hope in a resurrection (1-Thess. 4:13).

I’ll now turn to a couple of Psalms that have a Millennial theme to them, but also have a theme of joy applied to them.

Psalm 66:1—*this is wonderful*: “Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth. Sing forth the honor of His name; make His praise glorious. Say to God, ‘How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power, Your enemies submit themselves in obedience to You. All the earth shall worship You and shall sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name.’ Selah” (vs 1-4)—*which means, think of this, meditate upon it!*

So, the whole world will have a joyful experience all during the Millennium, the whole thousand years.

Psalm, 67:1: “May God be gracious to us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. Selah. So that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.... [over all the earth] ...Let the people praise You, O God; let all

the people praise You. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You. The earth shall yield its increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him” (vs 1-7).

We can see that by looking beyond this physical life. In this present world, the fruits of the Spirit will be very actively in operation. There will be no Satan the devil present anywhere on the earth to deceive people and produce negative feelings.

As the second fruit of the Spirit, *the evidence of joy will be dominant during the Millennium and far beyond that into the ages of eternity!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 5:22-23
- 2) John 15:5, 8-11
- 3) John 16:22
- 4) Romans 5:1-5
- 5) Acts 16:16-26
- 6) John 13:34-35
- 7) 1 Peter 1:3-4
- 8) Malachi 3:16-17
- 9) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- 10) Proverbs 23:24
- 11) Psalm 68:3-4
- 12) Deuteronomy 28:47
- 13) Galatians 5:22-23
- 14) Colossians 3:16-17
- 15) Philippians 4:4
- 16) Revelation 21:4
- 17) Romans 8:28
- 18) James 1:2-4
- 19) Matthew 5:10-12
- 20) Acts 7:52
- 21) 1 Timothy 6:17
- 22) Acts 13:46-50
- 23) Luke 10:19-22
- 24) 2 Corinthians 7:10
- 25) Psalm 66:1-4
- 26) Psalm 67:1-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ecclesiastes 3:4
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Romans 12:15
- Numbers 13; 14
- Galatians 2:20
- Isaiah 53:3
- Hebrews 1:8-9

The Second Fruit of the Spirit
(Go To Meeting)

- Psalm 45:6-7
- John 17:13
- Matthew 26:37-39
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13

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