

# IMPACT

**I** **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday  
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.  
Proverbs 3:5-6

**Passage:** Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

**Quote:** “God intends the Christian life to be a life of joy – not drudgery. The idea that holiness is associated with a dour disposition is a caricature of the worst sort. In fact, just the opposite is true. Only those who walk in holiness experience true joy.” Jerry Bridges

**J**oy is the “calm gladness” that comes with knowing that all is well between you and God; it does not depend upon pleasant circumstances. Joyful believers are to focus upon the hope of heaven even when the storms of life seem to overwhelm them with pain or sorrow. Peter comforted Christians who were driven from their homes through persecution. He said that their trials would prove the genuineness of their faith and that, even though “tested by fire, it *may be found to praise, honor, and glorify*” Christ at His coming.<sup>1</sup> Their faith caused them to “rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.”<sup>1</sup> In the parable of the sower and the seed, the seed that fell on rocky ground was likened to a person who heard the Word, received it with joy, but “fell away” after enduring persecution for a while.<sup>2</sup> He did not have saving faith and its abiding joy in Christ. What he might have had was the unstable imitation called “happiness” that fluctuates with the ebb and flow of life.

In the midst of pain and grief, joyful Christians can have the settled confidence that *God is in control of “it all!”*<sup>3</sup> Like the faithful in Hebrews 11, they can choose to rejoice in the worst of circumstances. Like Paul and Silas, they can sing praises to God “at midnight” while bound by the chains of affliction!

**T**hough sons of earth would buffet me and try my soul to tears, I'll bask within that blessed Light that scatters darkest fears. When fleshly hosts may gather 'round, and wars against me rise, I'll rest with confidence in God, and claim peace as my prize.

Dear Lord, make clear faith's waiv'ring eyes. Thy beauty I would see. I tremble at the purging touch that draws Thine own to Thee. Yet, sheltered in protective grace, I'll worship all my days. While heart and breath shall cling to life, *I'll joyfully sing praise!*

Oh, Abba, Father, hear my cry! Thy blessed mercy shed. When Thou didst bid me seek Thy face, 'twas to Thine arms I fled. If love of earth's frail ties forsakes, be Thou my help and stay. Lord, lead me in Thy path so plain, my hand in Thine always.

Though oft I faint from life's long toil towards death's awaiting door, Fresh hope I've found believing in the goodness of my Lord. Unlike *life's joyless vagabonds--grim strangers to God's grace--*<sup>4</sup> I'll wait secure within Thy bonds for strength to run life's race.<sup>5</sup>

Nothing compares to the joy that God gives to those who love, trust and obey Him. Sin robbed David of joy for a season. He wrote, “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and *rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*”<sup>6</sup> If you value your joy, guard your heart against temptation!

When sin robs your joy like it did David, confess it and plead for God to restore sweet fellowship with Him. If trials are dogging your path, embrace the truth that Almighty God is behind-the-scenes, directing the causes of both pain and praise for His glory and your good. To be sure, the martyrs of by-gone days and *our day* focused upon that truth as they refused to deny Christ! Rejoice that God “is able to keep *you* from stumbling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory *with exceeding joy*.” To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”<sup>7</sup>

## The Spirit's fruit, joy

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 1:3-9 <sup>2</sup> Matthew 13:1-23 <sup>3</sup> Romans 8:28-30 <sup>4</sup> Wistful: sad thoughts that made you happy in the past; Vagabond: wanderers “moving from place to place without a fixed home, leading an unsettled, irresponsible life.” <sup>5</sup> B. LaTour, 1991 based upon Psalm 27 <sup>6</sup> Please read Psalm 32. Commentators contend that this was written after Psalm 51. <sup>7</sup> Jude 24, 25