

Fall began with a glorious display of color. The weather was perfect, so we were still blessed with a garden full of flowers. Although it was Fall, the leaves stayed on the trees. Every morning, I would crawl out of bed and gaze at the trees, the beautiful garden, our mountain view, and most of all the amazingly gorgeous sky that was so creatively different every day. Aw! Thank you, dear Lord, for bringing such joy to my life!

The weeks go by, and the weather begins to change. The snow begins falling and continues for days and weeks on end - until we have almost a foot of snow. It seems I've been indoors for months! Outside it's gray and freezing. I'm feeling lonely and depressed. I begin to lose my joy. "Lord, is this a joke?"

His answer comes in the Scriptures. Have you ever wondered what Jesus meant in *Matthew 5:10-12*? *Jesus said, we are blessed when we are persecuted. We are blessed when we are insulted and lied about. We are to be glad.* How does that even make sense?

Let's look at the fruit of the Spirit in *Galatians 5:22*.

The fruit that the Spirit will grow in those who will live by Him are, "love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

So, the Spirit of God will provide joy in us as we live and behave according to His desires and plans for our lives. But how does that work? Well, there is one criterion that we can find in the Bible, and that is God. Whenever joy is expressed, God is working.

Let's look at a few of the many verses where we find this.

"Shout for joy, O sky! Rejoice, O earth! Let the mountains give a joyful shout! For the LORD consoles his people and shows compassion to the oppressed."

Isaiah 49:13

The Psalms are my favorites for finding how God touches our lives with goodness and joy.

"May all who take refuge in you be glad. Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, that those who love your name may exult in You. For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield."

Psalms 5:11

"You will make known to me the path of life; In your presence is fullness of joy, In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

Psalms 16:11

"Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."

Psalms 32:11

Even in times of trial and pain, we can find joy remembering our God and all He has done for us, to give us hope and a future. In those times, the smile may not appear on our lips, but it will be in our hearts. In those times, we can take a longer look in the Scriptures, praise God for who He is and what He has done. We can ask Him for His guidance in our lives, for His protection, and a reminder of His LOVE.

For more encouragement read these Psalms: 30:5, 33:1, 45:7, 51:12, 63:7, 67:4, 71:23

*~ Love and Blessings from your Women's Ministry Team,
Laurie, Daryn, Lori, Kelli, Cindy, Karen, Jody, and Michele ~*

