



... for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. With joy [we] will draw water from the wells of salvation. [Isaiah 12:2b-3](#)

JOY

Happiness is elusive. We reach for the latest thing only to find its celebrated place does not last. We strive to achieve yet feel empty as we stand atop another man-made mountain. Joy comes from a focus on something we can get a glimpse of now, as it points us to something farther away. Jesus saw the Joy of the Kingdom to come beyond the cross.

The Joy icon is a reticle that sights us forward toward all that is to come in Christ. We aim our lives in His direction, focused on following Him, the author of our salvation who is seated in glory and provides our joy.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

“The incarnation of the Son of God, ‘for us and for our salvation,’ is too big a thing to appreciate in just one day. Indeed, it is something the Christians will celebrate for all eternity.” John Piper

Joy Defined | eternal

Biblical joy is not temporal but eternal. It’s a joy that drew the shepherds from their work, and caused them to celebrate over the good news of a Savior. It’s a joy that caused angels to proclaim and sing about because peace was coming to mankind. It is based in the hope and peace we have in Christ. The greatness and goodness of God allows us to hope in his character and have a surety in his promises. The restoration that Christ brings, gives us peace with him. This hope and peace produces joy. When God opens our eyes to the glory of Christ in the gospel, we experience joy in him ([2 Corinthians 4:4-6](#)). Since joy is based in Christ, it cannot be lost. Whether we are experiencing sorrowful or celebratory circumstances, biblical joy is present. [Hebrews 12:2](#) tells us that Christ must endure suffering, for the joy that was before of him. His focus was on the joy found in the full reconciliation of all those who believe in him.

Joy Received | internal

Rather than our joy being focused on Christ and his gospel, it often gets focused and taken by temporary things. The enemy lies to us and tells us we can find joy in something other than Christ ([John 8:44](#)). We look to circumstances to give us joy, believing if they line up just right we will be joyful. We look to sin and receive pleasure in hope of joy, yet we are often left wanting more. We can look to others, either an individual or a community, and believe that if we had approval from them, or could identify with a particular group, we would be satisfied. But, time and time again we find that whatever our focus is on, it doesn’t give us lasting joy. Eventually it fails us and we are dissatisfied. Only when our story is consumed in Jesus’ story can we

experience biblical joy that is lasting. It cannot be stolen from us by suffering circumstances, or our failure to live an obedient life, or the rejection from others. We need to repent of our efforts to find lasting, satisfying joy in anything other than Christ. Then we will experience “the joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 [Thessalonians 1:6](#)).

Joy Shared | external

As we discussed, when we understand and receive the hope and peace found in Christ, the product is joy. This joy is reflected in worship. Worship is what God desires from all people, and it is the natural reaction of those who have experienced his Joy ([Psalm 67:3-4](#)). As disciples, we want God to receive this worship and for his glory to be seen by all. Therefore, we must make known the good news to others. We share the joy of our salvation and its goodness in our lives as deeply as we know and experience God’s goodness toward ourselves. In sharing His goodness, we are made joyful because God receives worship; and others are made joyful by the hope and peace they have in Christ, and in their worship to him.

RESPONSE

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. [Psalm 16:11](#)

Reflection Questions

Where does Biblical joy come from?

What are you pursuing, other than Christ, in the hope that once you get it, you will be joyful?

The angels came and told the shepherds of great news that gave them hope and peace, and resulted in their joy. Who are your “shepherds” that you are bringing the good news to? Who are the people in your life that God has moved you, with compassion, to care for and share the good news of Jesus?

Family Table Talk

What brings you joy?

How did Jesus’ arrival bring eternal joy for others?

How can we share that joy with others this season?

Advent Action

When we understand and believe the hope and peace of the gospel we have great joy and worship Jesus. We want Jesus to be glorified when others understand the gospel and experience His joy. Pick two or three people in your life, pray frequently for them, and invite them to a Christmas Eve service so they can hear about the hope and peace found in Jesus, and experience lasting joy.

Memory Verse

[Isaiah 12:2](#)

MORE RESOURCES

“All thy ways of mercy tend to and end in my delight. Thou didst weep, sorrow, suffer that I might rejoice. Thou art preparing joy for me and me for joy.” Valley of Vision

Articles & Blogs

[For Your Joy](#) - free eBook from John Piper

[Joy in Life's Hard Times](#) - article by Charles Spurgeon

[Joy and Suffering in Psalm 30](#) - blog by Brandy Goodwin (The Village Church)

Sermons

[Is Jesus Enough For Your Joy](#) - Sermon by Robert Greene (with reflective questions)

[Sorrowful Yet Always Rejoicing](#) - Sermon by John Piper (with transcript)

Hymns

[Joy Has Dawned](#) - The Turning (Terra Nova Church)

[Joy To The World](#) - Citizens & Saints (Mars Hill Church)

[Hark! The Herald Angels Sing \(Live\)](#) - Terra Nova Church

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. [Hebrews 12:2](#)
