

Study Guide

Fruitful #3 Discovering Joy

Text: Philippians 4:1-8

John Stott prayed this pray each day:

Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

God wants his people to live joy-filled lives. And they do — when they walk in his ways.

Joy is a promise we can all claim, and an expectation we can all have. Our lives can and should be defined by joy — if we're willing to do what joy requires.

The joy that is promised to each believer goes a little deeper than mere happiness.

Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world. John Piper

It's interesting that Piper emphasizes that joy is a feeling. He would be the first to say, of course, that we don't live by our feelings, we live by our faith.

Nevertheless, when we are walking in step with the Holy Spirit, we can expect to experience the *emotion* of joy on a consistent basis.

Joy is a good feeling in the soul that is not at all dependent on our circumstances, but is dependent upon the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

You can't manufacture joy on your own it's a gift from God — but as we saw in week one of this series, we must do our work in cultivating the Spirit's fruit.

Three ways you can cultivate the quality of Holy Spirit-inspired joy in your daily walk.

1. Eliminate the Joy-Breakers.

The first joy-breaker to watch out for is the habit of complaining. Ref: Philippians 2:2

Anytime you begin to complain, bicker, grumble, gripe, criticize, or demean others, you relinquish your joy.

A second joy-breaker to watch out for is bitterness.

When you allow some offense from the past or some conflict from the past dominate your thoughts and take control of your emotions, you surrender your joy. Ref: Ephesians 4:31,32

Bitterness is never worth the price you pay to indulge it. Don't let the past live in your head rent free. Ref: Ephesians 4:31-32

A third joy-breaker to watch out for is the current situation — whatever it may be.

You need to be on the lookout always for anything that threatens to get between and your ability to enjoy the Holy Spirit's presence in your life. Ref: 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:4

2. Focus on the Joy Builders.

Each one of us needs to learn to recognize the joy-builders that God has placed in our lives and give them our time and attention. Ref: Philippians 4:8

The more we learn to acknowledge and appreciate the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world, the more we experience the joy of the Holy Spirit. Ref: Philippians 4:8

3. Strive to be a Joy-Bringer.

Make my joy complete by being like-minded... (Philippians 2:2)

Try to make at least one person's day, every day.

When you make it your objective to bring joy into the lives of others, it inevitably comes back your way. Ref: Proverbs 11; 25

Jesus—Others---You. It works. This is the pattern for joy.

Joy comes from the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Would you receive this gift today? Ref: Acts 2:38

