

**What's in YOUR Garden?  
The Fruit of the Spirit: JOY!**

**Pastor Bill Bowers**

**July 31, 2016**

Galatians 5:22-26

*"Joy is at the heart of who God is, and we will never understand the significance of Joy in human life until we understand its importance to God!" John Ortberg*

*"You'll not understand God until you understand this about Him, God is the happiest being in the universe." Dallas Williard*

*I've said these things to you so that My joy might be in you. (Jesus)*  
John 15:11

*"To miss out on joy is to miss out on the reason for your existence."*  
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*The chief end of human beings is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. (Westminster Catechism)*

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**For Personal Reflection or LifeGroup Questions**  
**What's in YOUR Garden?**  
**"The Fruit of the Spirit: JOY"**  
**Pastor Bill Bowers / July 31, 2016**

1. Continuing our exploration into the Fruit of the Spirit, we meet with "joy" as our next evidence of God's nature manifesting itself in us. In your own words, how would you describe joy? Would you say that you typify your definition of joy? Are you a joyful or joy-filled person? Explain what makes you joyful or your reasoning for not being full of joy.
2. One of the more common and passionate desires of people is to be happy. It is even prominently featured in our nation's constitution: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*" Yet, Christians will often say, "God is not concerned with our happiness..." Which perspective do you think is more accurate? Happiness is a Creator endowed right or God is not concerned with our happiness?
3. Do you think joy and happiness are synonymous in their respective definitions or do you think they are mutually exclusive? Please explain your answers.
4. Joy is a state of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope. It is something or someone that provides a source of happiness. It appears 88 times in the Old Testament in 22 books; 57 times in the New Testament in 18 books. Can you find 4—5 scripture references in the Old Testament (copy or make note of what they say) and 4—5 references in the New Testament. Do these references help to deepen your understanding of joy from a biblical perspective? Do these references compel you to change your perspective?
5. Pastor Bill provided us with a couple of interesting "joy" quotes in this Sunday message. He shared these two from prominent theologians: "*Joy is at the heart of who God is, and we will never understand the significance of Joy in human life until we understand its importance to God!*" (John Ortberg). "*You'll not understand God until you understand this about Him, God is the happiest being in the universe.*" (Dallas Willard). Do you think these quotes are accurate depictions of the character of God? Is this the vision or image you have of God... as the "happiest" being in the universe? Why or why not? Explain/discuss any other thoughts you may have on this idea.
6. What do you think or how would you describe any challenges to living a joy-filled life?
7. "I've said these things to you so that My joy might be in you." (Jesus—from John 15:11). Is the joy of Jesus in you? If yes, how are you sharing this joy with others so they too might be filled with the "joy of the Lord"? If no, what might need to change so you could experience the joy of the Lord?

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