

Joy



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Galatians 5:22-23

ESV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Merriam-Webster defines joy as “the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires ... the expression or exhibition of such emotion ... a state of happiness or felicity ... [and] a source or cause of delight.”

The American Psychology Association (“APA”) defines joy as “a feeling of extreme gladness, delight, or exultation of the spirit arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction.” The APA further explains that joy can be passive or active. “Passive joy involves tranquility and a feeling of contentment with things as they are.” “Active joy involves a desire to share one’s feelings with others ... [it involves] more engagement and intensity of ... emotion.”

Some people ask what is joy, but intense happiness? The APA states that happiness is “an emotion of joy, gladness, satisfaction, and well-being.” Merriam-Webster defines happiness as “a state of well-being and contentment ... pleasurable or satisfying experience.” In the eyes of this world, there is no difference between joy and happiness ... However, biblically is there one?

The Bible Dictionary of Bible Themes defines happiness as “a state of pleasure or joy experienced both by people and by God, but subject to change according to circumstances.” The same dictionary defines joy as “a quality or attitude of delight and happiness, which is ultimately grounded in the work of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” When digging deeper, the dictionary also has a specification for joy and the human experience. “Joy is experienced naturally in many circumstances of life and in human

relationships. It is especially important in the life of God's people, who experience joy in response to all that God has done for them."

God puts joy, abundant joy, in our heart (Psalm 4:7), and his mere presence results in the "fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). The Bible further states that we should take joy in God because of our salvation despite our circumstances in life (Habakkuk 3:17-18). We need to rejoice because of our joy in Christ (Philippians 4:4).

The difference is the source of the happiness or joy... Are you happy because of your experiences and circumstances? Or are you joyful because despite everything in your life, good or bad, because of Christ and what he has done for you?