

D E V O T I O N A L

Hollywood Prayer Network

JOY

This week we are excited about finding JOY in the midst of sorrow and experiencing the joy of the Lord in all circumstances. We all desire to live a life of joy and yet how many of us know that the joy of the Lord is our strength? God's will for your life is to rejoice and be joyful! Practice being joyful this week!

DAY 1

REJOICE ALWAYS!

"THE SECRET OF GOSPEL CHANGE IS BEING CONVINCED THAT JESUS IS THE GOOD LIFE AND THE FOUNTAIN OF JOY. ANY ALTERNATIVE WE MIGHT CHOOSE WOULD BE THE LET DOWN."

-TIM CHESTER

1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 5:18

New International Version

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

DAY 1

PRAY: Dear God, I want to always be in an attitude of rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving. Please have Your Holy Spirit fill me up with supernatural joy and thanks so that I am living in Your will every day. And what a freeing thought, Lord, to know that if I am always rejoicing, praying, and thanking You for all the details of my life, that I am living in the center of Your will. Thank You for helping me to choose joy and do with me what is needed to make that happen. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

REFLECT: So often we are asking God what His will is. Should I take this job? Is she the right one for me? Is this where I should live? Lord, what is Your will for my life? And now we know – it's simply to rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances. That's a freeing thought to know that we can let go of the details of our life and trust that they will work out, as long as we're keeping our hearts, minds and souls focused on the Lord, with rejoicing, prayer and thankfulness!

D A Y 1

ACT: See if you can last all day today without asking God for anything! Just choose to rejoice in everything, pray about everything, and thank Him for everything – regardless of whether it is bad or good! At the end of the day you will feel more joyful, prayerful and thankful. Joy is a choice. Give it a try! Ready. Set. Go!...

DAY 2

TEARS TURNED TO JOY

"LAUGHTER DULLS THE SHARPEST PAIN AND FLATTENS OUT THE GREATEST STRESS. TO SHARE IT IS TO GIVE A GIFT OF HEALTH, BECAUSE, AS SOMEONE POINTED OUT: ULCERS CAN'T GROW WHILE YOU'RE LAUGHING."

-HUNTER "PATCH" ADAMS

Psalms 126:5-6

New International Version

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

D A Y 2

PRAY: Lord, help me to find joy in my sorrow. I know that as I weep tears, I will reap songs of joy because You turn my sorrow into dancing. Will You please do that for me now? I need You to find joy in my sadness and experience the joy that only You can give me. I'm here Lord and calling for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECT: The ways of the Lord are so often opposite of man's ways. Think about how you can find joy in your sorrow. Could it be that if you don't experience the darkness of sorrow you can't fully experience the lightness of joy? We will never know what real joy is if we don't know what sadness feels like – in the contrast is where we gain understanding. Have you felt both extremes – dark sorrow and total joy? Can you say that one helps you to understand the importance of the other?

D A Y 2

ACT: Can you pray for the people in Hollywood who make the world laugh and cry?!? They need our prayers in order to serve the world with their stories, gifts, and talents so that we can experience both joy and sorrow in the movie theaters, on television, on our phones, and through listening to our favorite songs. The people in the entertainment industry feel deep sorrow, loneliness, isolation, judgment, and fear. But that's how they write rich stories and complex characters. Would you pray that they are able experience the joy of the Lord and that they know the source of that joy! Your prayers for them will not only change their lives and make an eternal difference, but also bring you joy.

DAY 3

JOY: A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"IF HAPPINESS IS WHAT YOU'RE AFTER, THEN YOU ARE GOING TO BE LET DOWN FREQUENTLY AND BE UNHAPPY MUCH OF YOUR TIME. JOY, THOUGH, IS SOMETHING ELSE. IT'S NOT A CHOICE, NOT A RESPONSE TO SOME RESULT, IT IS A CONSTANT. JOY IS 'THE FEELING WE HAVE FROM DOING WHAT WE ARE FASHIONED TO DO, NO MATTER THE OUTCOME.'"

-MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

Galatians 5:22

New International Version

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

DAY 3

PRAY: Lord, would You fill me with all of the fruits of the Spirit so that I can be overflowing today with love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and, especially, joy. I need You to help me to live out these traits in my life. I want to experience Your joy today, so please fill me up new and fresh with all the fruits of Your Spirit. Selah! Amen.

REFLECT: Wouldn't it be amazing to be known for living out all of the fruits of the Spirit in your life every day? God defines these fruits very specifically and then He makes them all available to us. Reflect on each one and ask the Lord to show you how to embrace them, or show you what transformation needs to happen for you to become more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled. With God nothing is impossible!

D A Y 3

ACT: What one fruit of the Spirit do you want to have more of in your life? Choose one fruit of the Spirit and commit to become more like that. Whichever one you choose, you may need to pray more about it, read more scriptures that deal with that, and change your thoughts to focus more on that particular fruit. Just take one at a time and ask the Lord to understand it, embrace it and have it transform you.

DAY 4

GOD TURNS ANXIETY TO JOY

“WHEN WE ARE POWERLESS TO DO A THING,
IT IS A GREAT JOY THAT WE CAN COME AND
STEP INSIDE THE ABILITY OF JESUS.”

-CORRIE TEN BOOM

Psalms 94:19

New International Version

When anxiety was great within me, your
consolation brought joy to my soul.

D A Y 4

PRAY: Dear Father in Heaven, I ask for You to take away my anxiety and fill me with joy. My anxiety is great within me as I worry about the cares and concerns in my life, but I know that Your consolation will bring me joy. Please Father, fill me up with Your consoling joy, deep down into my soul, so that my anxiety will melt away. I need You every hour and thank You for Your faithfulness. Amen.

REFLECT: We don't often think of God as a consoling God. But what a great truth to know that the God of the Universe consoles us and brings us joy. We often try on our own to deal with our anxiety, but this verse says that He is the one who brings me joy by His consolation. That same consolation is available to you any time, to get rid of anxiety and bring joy to your soul. When we are powerless we can depend on Jesus!

ACT: Ask God right now to console you. Ask Him to take away your anxiety so that you can physically, tangibly, emotionally, and spiritually feel the worry melt away and joy fill you up. Can you believe that's possible? Can you feel His presence and His loving consoling? Just sit in silence for a few minutes and think of God filling up your every cell and pore with His consoling JOY.

DAY 5

REJOICE WITH OTHERS

"THERE IS NOT ONE BLADE OF GRASS,
THERE IS NO COLOR IN THIS WORLD
THAT IS NOT INTENDED TO MAKE US
REJOICE."

-JOHN CALVIN

Luke 1:58

New International Version

Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

DAY 5

PRAY: Lord, help me to have joy when others are blessed. I want to feel Your joy when my family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors and even my enemies experience joy. It's hard to feel true joy, without any jealousy, when others experience Your mercy and blessings, but I want to be that person. Help me to sincerely and generously rejoice with others and share their joy with them, as You tell us to, regardless of how I'm feeling at the time. Amen.

REFLECT: When have you felt complete joy for someone else when they experienced a blessing, a great answer to prayer, or even an earthly success? Is that hard for you? Can you remember when the Lord has shown someone else mercy and you got a twinge of jealousy? Be honest with the Lord and yourself about how you respond to the successes and blessings of others. Can you say that you are joyful?

DAY 5

ACT: Choose one friend, family member or acquaintance who has just had something great happen to them. To intentionally experience joy, write them a congratulations note, or call them to say how happy you are for them, or email some kind and loving words. Celebrate with them! Take that step, as the first in many, to rejoice with others who are joyful. It will fill them up with God's love, feed your soul, and bring you more joy as well.

DAY 6

FIND JOY IN YOUR TRIALS

"IF WE CAN JUST LET GO AND TRUST THAT THINGS WILL WORK OUT THE WAY THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO, WITHOUT TRYING TO CONTROL THE OUTCOME, THEN WE CAN BEGIN TO ENJOY THE MOMENT MORE FULLY. THE JOY OF THE FREEDOM IT BRINGS BECOMES MORE PLEASURABLE THAN THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF."

-GOLDIE HAWN

2 Corinthians 8:2

New International Version

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

DAY 6

PRAY: Lord, it's easy to feel joy when everything is going well, but I don't know how to experience joy in the midst of severe trials. I want to feel "the joy of the Lord" all the time—despite my circumstances or the events in the world around me. I want my depleted finances, emotions, or faith, to well up into rich generosity in my spirit, so that I can overflow with joy in any and every situation. I ask that You show me how to experience Your joy all the time, and I look forward to experiencing rich generosity. Amen.

REFLECT: Have you thought about how difficult it is to feel joy when you're going through hard times? It's impossible without the Lord. How can you live such a Christ-like life that you can experience joy in the midst of hardship, sickness, poverty, brokenness, pain or severe trials? God tells us it's possible with Him, so reflect on what changes you would need in your life to have more joy?

DAY 6

ACT: Assuming you have some trial in your life right now, can you define it and then choose to seek joy in the midst of it? There may be many areas of disappointment, pain, frustration, sadness or stress, but choose one and ask the Lord to help you, change you, and mold you into a joyful person while dealing with that situation. Don't get discouraged if it doesn't happen right away. You are choosing to change a lifetime habit by seeking joy in moments when you usually feel a negative emotion. Give yourself permission to let go of the worry and choose to feel joy. May it well up into rich generosity.

DAY 7

DANCE WITH JOY

“DO NOT ABANDON YOURSELVES TO
DESPAIR. WE ARE THE EASTER PEOPLE AND
HALLELUJAH IS OUR SONG.”

-POPE JOHN PAUL II

Psalms 30:11-12

New International Version

You turned my wailing into dancing; you
removed my sackcloth and clothed me
with joy, that my heart may sing to you
and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will
give you thanks forever.

DAY 7

PRAY: God, I know that You can turn my wailing into joy, so I praise You for pulling me out of my struggles and filling me with joy. I need You to take away the pain, struggle, fear or anger and replace it with dancing! I don't feel joyful, but I know You can change my heart and my mind so that my heart can sing Your praises. I don't want to be sad and silent, Lord. I will praise You and give You thanks forever and ever. Amen.

REFLECT: When we're sad, lonely, depressed, angry or fearful, it's so hard to pull ourselves out of it. In fact, we sometimes can't. Negative emotions are often a downward spiral, but the Lord tells us that He can turn our wailing into dancing, and He can have our hearts sing. So, we need to turn to Him to get us out of the dark places that we fall into. Think about how He can pull you out of your dark place. Can you trust Him to do that?

DAY 7

ACT: Joy is a choice, not just a feeling we can muster up. And God tells us how we can get that joy – through Him. Don't be silent. Ask Him right now to change your thoughts and emotions from sackcloth and wailing to joy, dancing, and praise! It's not an immediate transformation. It takes prayer, Bible reading and commitment. But, take a step right now, at the end of this week, and praise your God and give Him thanks – forever.