

The Joy
of the Lord
is your
Strength

**a feeling of great pleasure
and happiness**

JOY



*delight, pleasure, rejoicing, bliss,
happiness, exhilaration*

Neh 8:1-4

All the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel.

² So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. ³ He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

⁴ Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

Neh 8:5-9

Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up.⁶ Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

⁷ The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah— instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there.⁸ They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and ⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Neh 8:10-12

Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve.”

12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength"

(Neh 8:10)

- **First came the preaching of God's word: the people were hungry to hear it.**
- **"Sermon tasters"**
- **Ezra preached from the scriptures for hours. At times he stopped to "bless the Lord, the great God" and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands". As certain passages were read, "they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (8:6)**

The Israelites wanted even more of God's word.

Neh 8:7-8

The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there.⁸ They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

As the people grasped God's law, they began to mourn over their sin.

Neh 8:9

All the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

➤ **God turned their mourning into joy!**

Neh 8:10

Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Repentance brought gladness and strength to God's people.

Neh 8:12

Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy (mirth), because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

➤ The Hebrew word for “joy” (mirth) here means “glee, merriment, gladness, happiness.”

Whenever Israel turned to sin and idolatry, the Lord removed their mirth:

Hosea 2:11

I will also cause all her mirth to cease.

Jer 25:10-11

I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, and this whole land shall be...an astonishment.

Isa 24:11

All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

Israel consecrated themselves unto the Lord

Neh 9:2

The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins.

Neh 10:29-30

They...entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law...and that (they) would not give (their) daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for (their) sons.

***If you are losing the joy of the Lord,
you are in spiritual danger.***

➤ **Joy Protects You from Religion**



George Müller

I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how the inner life might be nourished.

*If you are losing the joy of the Lord,
you are in spiritual danger.*

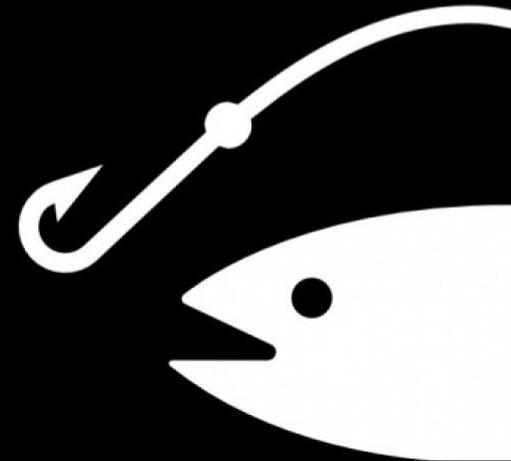
➤ Joy Protects You from Temptations

When you are more than satisfied in Christ,
what more could you possibly want?

This is bait.

Matthew Henry

Joy in the Lord will guard you from the empty pleasures the tempter uses to bait his hooks.



choose

joy!