



Why the Joy of the LORD IS Our Strength! Bible Study Leader Guide

By Patricia Willoughby

Please provide, if possible, musical accompaniment, hymnals, and Bibles for attendees.

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Father in heaven, reveal to us the strength there is to be found in You and through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Fill our hearts with Your joy. Amen.

LACKING JOY

Joy derived from circumstances can be ever so fleeting. Getting a new job — which wears off after the first six months. The joy of a new baby — which wanes after several sleepless nights or a difficult diagnosis. The big deal is concluded — but worry over details yet to come prevents sleep. Why do we not have lasting joy?

Ecclesiastes 2:24–26; 1 Timothy 6:17 Without God, there is no true lasting joy.

[Ecclesiastes 2:24-26](#)

²⁴ There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[1 Timothy 6:17](#)

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Psalm 143:3; John 10:10 There is a spiritual adversary, Satan, who is a thief, who comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

[Psalm 143:3](#)

³ For the enemy has pursued my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

[John 10:10](#)

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 3:18; Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death and separation from God.

[John 3:18](#)

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

[Romans 6:23](#)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When the Israelites rebelled, God called them to come back to Him through the prophet Isaiah (30:15a): *In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.* He continues to draw all to Himself through the Holy Spirit, His Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

LIVING JOY

There is eternal joy in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, even when we come into various trials — for they serve a purpose. List several reasons for that everlasting joy.

John 3:16–17; John 10:9–11 Joy of salvation because our sins are forgiven and we are no longer condemned. We have abundant life.

John 3:16-17

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 10:9-11

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Ephesians 2:18–20; Revelation 3:4–6: Joy that we are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God and our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Ephesians 2:18-20

18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Revelation 3:4-6

4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

2 Corinthians 5:1–2: Trials serve to remind us that we have a building from God, a house not made of hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2

¹For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

Colossians 1:26–28: In the midst of trials, through us God can make known the mystery of this glory, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory to those around us.

Colossians 1:26-28

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

James 1:2–4: Testing of our faith produces steadfastness.

James 1:2-4

²Count it all joy, my brothers,^[a] when you meet trials of various kinds,³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

John 16:33: Joy that we can have peace because Jesus has overcome the world.

John 16:33

³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Hebrews 13:5b: Joy that Jesus promises to never leave us nor forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5b

^{5b} for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

No one likes suffering, yet all people suffer because of the fallen nature of the world. We can remember how God used Christ’s sufferings to save us and that He will also use our suffering to bring Christ’s saving work to others who have no hope. When we face temptation and trouble in this world, we can

2019 Winter *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*

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take heart that Christ has overcome the world for our sake and gives us the lasting peace that only He can give.*

LASTING JOY

We can stand firm against the devil, the joy stealer!

John 14:3: Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and He will return to bring us there.

John 14:3

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

James 4:6–8a: We submit ourselves to God, draw near to Him and He will draw near to us, cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

James 4:6-8^a

⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ^{8a} Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Nehemiah 8:10b: The joy of the LORD is your strength.

Nehemiah 8:10^b

^{10b} And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Read Together **Psalm 51:10–12.**

Psalm 51:10-12

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right^a spirit within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

CONCLUSION: When we are hurting, struggling or grieving, we can find our strength in the eternal joy of the LORD because Jesus is greater in us than he that is in the world. Whatever our lot in life is, we can say without hesitation, “It is well with our souls.”

CLOSING HYMN: “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus” (LSB #685; LW #381; TLH #409).

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with Your unspeakable joy so that Your light shines through us, especially when we are struggling. Let others see the hope of Christ in us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Based on notes for Colossians 1:26–29, page 2045, and John 16:25–33, pg1816, *Lutheran Study Bible*.

Patricia lives in Georgetown, Texas, with her family and serves those with special needs in her church. She has a passion for God’s Word and has written other Bible studies for LWML.