

Rejoice Always!

by Mike Johnson

1 Thessalonians 5:16 says we are to “*Rejoice always.*” In the Greek, this passage is the shortest verse in the Bible. In contrast, the shortest verse in the English deals with the opposite emotion, which is sorrow. This verse is **John 11:35**, which says, “*Jesus wept.*”

It is incredible how many times the concept of **joy** occurs in the New Testament. Earlier, in **1 Thessalonians 1:6**, Paul speaks of the joy of the Thessalonians while facing persecutions. In Jerusalem, the apostles faced arrests and beatings during the days of the early church. In the midst of this, they rejoiced as they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ (**Acts 5:41**). The preaching of the gospel in Samaria also caused great joy (**Acts 8:8**). When the Ethiopian was converted (**Acts 8:39**), “*he went on his way, rejoicing.*”

Acts 15:3 tells us that the brethren in Jerusalem rejoiced when they heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the Philippian jailer rejoiced after his conversion (**Acts 16:34**). Even though Paul wrote Philippians from prison, he used the word “**joy**,” or some form of it, 17 times in this book. The verse sometimes called the theme of the entire book is **Philippians 4:3**, which says, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice.*”

How can a Christian “*rejoice always*”? Christians face hardships and shed tears, like everyone else. God’s people, however, always have a reason to rejoice no matter what happens. This situation exists because their joy pertains to their relationship with God instead of external circumstances. Nothing, not even death, can ever rob Christians of their abundant, spiritual blessings and the joy they have in Christ.

Many happy events can happen to Christians. However, they will also face hardships. Even in these, they can continue to rejoice. Believers can “smile through their tears.”

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