

Like in Nehemiah 8:10, we oftentimes hear people say, “The joy of the Lord is my strength.” This scripture contains a lot more depth and implications than meets the eye. We have two very powerful keywords here, “Joy & Strength”. Let’s define them.

**Joy:** The emotion evoked by well-being, a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. In essence, joy produces a deep-rooted inspired expression of happiness and peace. That’s why joy, rather than pleasure, is a lasting inner state as it is not subject to circumstances, but rather is deeply rooted within us, and has its source in living according to our deep seated spiritual values.

**Strength:** It is the capacity to withstand great force or pressure. In other words, it gives us the ability to act and the power to change things. Spiritually, it encompasses strength of mind, moral and spiritual knowledge, and we use the power of faith that generates inner strength, rather than depending on outward circumstances.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans said this: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Rom 15:13) Do we live with the Lord’s joy and strength in this troubled world right now?

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Paul tells us that joy, just as much as love, peace and all godly attitudes of life, all have their source in the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore since joy is a lasting state deeply rooted within us, it becomes a governing attitude in how we see this life within the concept of eternity. And that concept of eternity is surely not found in this world but rather in God.

Jeremiah 15:16 says, “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” In other words, the joy is received not only from reading God’s Word, but more importantly getting understanding from the Holy Spirit. The result is that we espouse God’s Word by applying what we learn to our lives, so as to live to the glory of God.

The prophet Isaiah said, “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3) Indeed, our salvation through Christ allows us to draw from the Holy Spirit which produces exceeding joy in our lives. That’s why Jesus said in John 16:23-24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

Are we partaking in His Joy right now?

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Paul tells us to “Rejoice Always”, in essence a command, as it adds that “It is the will of God in Christ Jesus.” In other words, we are told to pick ourselves up, stop being distracted and letting ourselves be discouraged by the world around us, and rather focus and be steadfast on the purpose and source of our joy, Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

The scripture also implies that we must give thanks to God for our eternal salvation, and pray without ceasing, the proof of our intent to draw our faith, peace and joy from the Lord. In addition, feeding our spirit and soul with the very powerful and strong Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, gives us the power to fend off the attacks and temptations of the enemy.

Peter clearly illustrates the purpose of joy in talking about Christ this way; “Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.” (1 Peter 1:8-9)

What is the end of our faith? Isn’t it in knowing that our mansion awaits us in heaven to be basking in God’s glory and live eternally in the presence of our Lord? On a scale of 1 to 10, how’s our joy right now?

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How can we define the nature and source of the spiritual strength that gives us the ability to live victoriously for Christ? Paul in 2 Cor 12:8-9 provides a personal example when he asked the Lord to free him from “a thorn in the flesh”, and said, “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in ‘weakness.’”

It is evident that our spiritual strength doesn’t have its source in the world and the flesh, but rather it can only found in God. That’s why in Philippians 4:13 Paul added, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” What a powerful and encouraging truth! Jesus also confirmed that our power isn’t found in the world, as he spoke to His disciples following the event with the rich young man saying, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Mat 19:26)

Now, let’s never forget that anyone born of the Spirit of God has access to God’s power and strength, as Eph 3:20 states “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”

How is that power working in us right now?

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## THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH



(Message 5 of 7)

**“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1Cor 1:18**

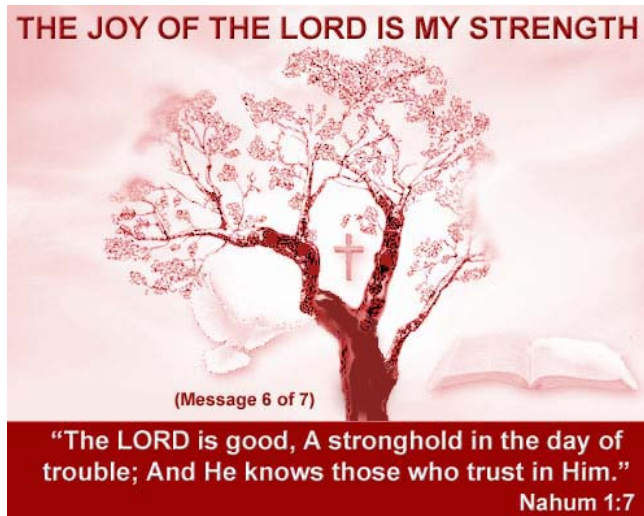
Obviously, our only source of spiritual strength is generated by the very power of God, and it should be a continuous connection that allows us to face each and every situation of life. Then, what purpose is there for that powerful strength from the Lord?

Peter gives us what we can consider a most clear picture of why God energizes and empowers us as such; “If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.” (1Peter 4:11)

To best illustrate that, all we do in the Name of the Lord must have for sole purpose to give God glory. David in Psalm 73:26 wrote, “My flesh and my heart fail; *but God is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” In essence, nothing within us will forever stand, other than what God has deposited in us through Christ Jesus.

Therefore, let’s always remember the very purpose of our mission on this earth, to live to God’s glory sharing the message of the cross to a lost and dying world. How possible? “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2Tim 1:7

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Are there enough promises in the Word of God to enable us to live victoriously in Christ? How about these:

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” (Deut 31:6)

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

“Fear not, for I *am* with you; be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

“Lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” (Mat 28:20)

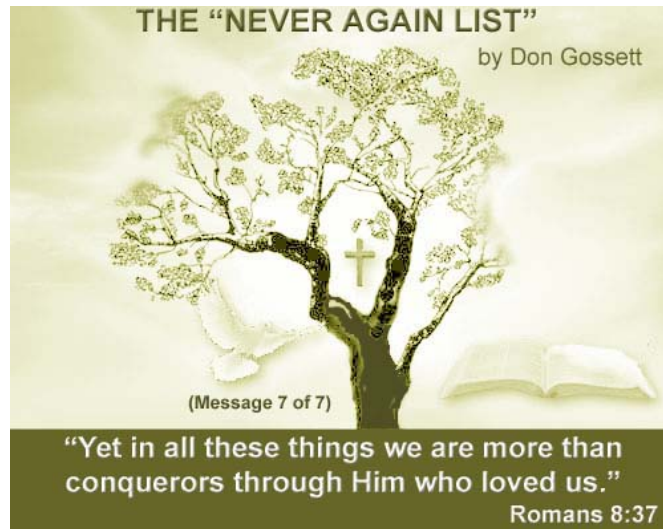
“For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.” (John 16:33)

And perhaps the most heart wrenching and powerful:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

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I came across this "My never again list" by the late Don Gossett, who prior to his death served the Lord in active ministry for sixty-six years. He explained that what strengthened him in his faith were these scriptures:

Never again will I confess "I can't" for "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Phillip. 4:13)

Never again will I confess lack, for "My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phillip. 4:19)

Never again will I confess fear, for "God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7)

Never again will I confess doubt and lack of faith, for "God has given to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3)

Never again will I confess weakness, for "The Lord is the strength of my life." (Ps. 27:1), and "But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." (Dan. 11:32)

Never again will I confess supremacy of Satan over my life, for "Greater is He that is within me than he that is in the world." (I John 4:4)

Never again will I confess defeat, for "God always causes me to triumph in Christ Jesus." (II Cor. 2:14)

A useful list worth keeping in sight as we face the challenges of life, right?

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