



A SEASON  
OF PRAYER  
DEVOTIONAL

*The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy*

# PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

## What we are doing

Our church has entered into a season of prayer. You have been given three specific things that we would like our church to bathe in prayer:

- For God to grow in us a heart for **discipleship**.
- For God to guide us in the possible building of a **new worship center**.
- For God to guide us in the possibility of **planting a church**.

We feel that all of these things are important elements for the future of our church, and we know that they can only be fruitful if they are:

- Lead by the Spirit.
- Bathed in prayer.
- Implemented by a unified body.

Our main desire is for God's will to be done in His Church. This can only happen through each individual member of the body living lives that share that same priority. Therefore, we feel that we must pray! Our hope in this time is that we are seeking God individually as we seek God's will corporately and in unity.

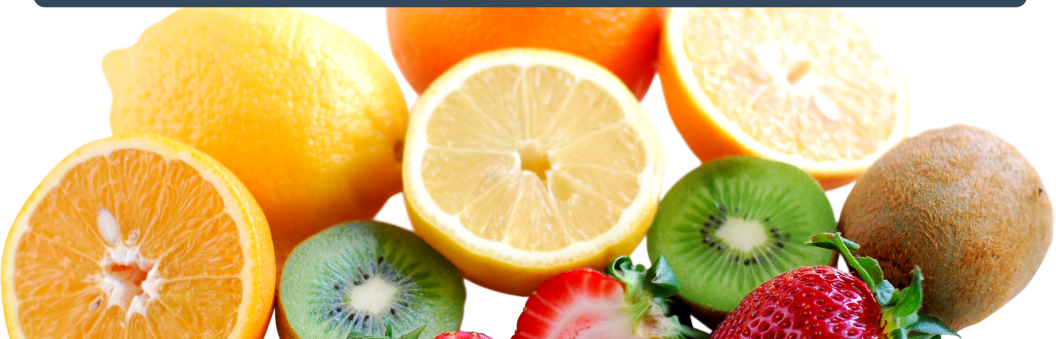
When Jesus' disciples asked Him how they should pray, the example He gave them (The Lord's Prayer), began with praise to the One they were speaking to when they prayed. During our prayer times in the coming weeks, we will be following a similar pattern that Jesus gave to His disciples.

# THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: JOY

In Galatians 5:22-23 we find nine evidences of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer. This list should not be seen as a list of chores, rather it should be seen as natural growth. Warren Weirsbe says it like this "When you think of "works" you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of "fruit" you think of beauty, quietness, the unfolding of life." At conversion, we receive a completely new way to live and function, we even grow differently. The fruit of the Spirit are indicators of good, healthy, and natural growth as the Spirit grows us in our new nature/our new normal.

For the next several weeks we will be praying through these different fruits as we seek to enjoy the bounty (John 10:10) that is provided through life in Christ.

**Joy-** We are surrounded by so many things that, we are told, should bring us joy. Things like relationships, money, health, experiences, job titles, and the list goes on and on.



# **PART 1: THE JOY GOD PROVIDES**

And while these things do come with a certain level of enjoyment, they all have conditions and limitations. For a believer, we given access to a source of joy that is limitless, and the joy described in scripture is more than a good feeling. The term carries with it happiness, peace, comfort & stability. Let's take a look at some ways to better understand & display this joy.

**Neh. 8:1-10 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law... 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground...**



# PART 1 CONT.: THE JOY GOD PROVIDES

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. 10 Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, ***for the joy of the Lord is your strength.***”

*This passage is about a time when the children of Israel had been living in sin for many years & upon hearing God's Word, they wept in repentance. Nehemiah used their response to teach them to rejoice in the gift of repentance.*

## Points to ponder:

- Why should repentance lead to joy?
- What does this passage say about the importance of right relationship with God?
- Are there things in your life, above your relationship with God, that are your primary source of joy?
- Do you need to commit to enjoying God & obedience to His word in a more joyful way?



## PART 2: THE JOY GOD PROVIDES

Joy in the Lord is freeing.

**Zeph. 3:17** The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

**Philippians 4:47** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Points to ponder:

- Are there burdens you need to surrender to Him?
- Take time to rejoice in His gift of freedom.

# PART 3: THE JOY GOD PROVIDES

Luke 2:8-20 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ... 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ***19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.***

Points to ponder

- Consider verses 19-20. How can you respond to the truth of God & His word in a similar way?



*Pray without ceasing!*