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3. Experiencing the Holy Spirit's Joy and Peace

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3. Experiencing the Holy Spirit's Joy and Peace

This Bible study lesson is based on Chapter 4 of *The Abiding Room*, a book by Kevin Seacat.

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The blessings of living in the Holy Spirit are quite stunning when you think about it. God has placed His Holy Spirit in you so you can live with joy and peace regardless of your circumstances. And the Holy Spirit gives you guidance and the power to carry out the work He has planned for you. This is truly the abundant life Jesus spoke of: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10 NIV).

Even when the world around you is in chaos, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit living within you, you can have joy and peace. You no longer have to be controlled by life's ups and downs. You now have it within you to be in control of your attitude and reaction to every moment and event of every day!

That's what Jesus told His disciples on the last night before His death. Their world would present them with trouble, but they could have Jesus' joy and peace in the midst of it because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. His followers were about to begin experiencing a new, miraculous inner calm despite life's tribulations.

The same Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised the disciples lives in you as well. You, too, can experience the daily hope He promised them: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11 NIV). "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NIV).

Experiencing Joy and Peace in Your Daily Life

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26 NIV).

The translation above describes the Holy Spirit as Helper. Other translations of the Bible give the Holy Spirit different descriptive names such as Advocate, Counselor, and Comforter. Let's briefly explore the wonderful promise of peace Jesus made to

His disciples the night before He went to the cross: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27 NIV).

Through your relationship with the Holy Spirit, you can have contentment in any situation. Far beyond being a mere coping mechanism, God the Father has placed the Holy Spirit within you to guide you through every situation of your life: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23 NIV).

The joy and peace Jesus spoke of on His last night before going to the cross is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When you are walking in the Spirit, you will experience all of the fruit of the Spirit, including joy and peace. This joy and peace, which far surpasses the world’s fickle happiness that ebbs and flows with life’s uncontrollable circumstances, is available to you regardless of your situation.

Happiness comes from the external world, while joy comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit. Happiness comes and goes with your often unmanageable situations, while joy can flow from your relationship with Jesus in any situation. “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me” (John 14:1 NIV).

Learning to trust Jesus and experience the power of the Holy Spirit takes practice. As you trust Him in the minor details of ordinary days, you’re preparing to trust Him when life’s bigger challenges arise. Yes, there will still be sadness and grief, but relying on His indwelling presence in the person of the Holy Spirit will bring you hope. You become increasingly better at handling life’s uncertainties, disappointments, and heartbreaks in ways that would otherwise be impossible. You develop the understanding that, through the Holy Spirit, you have the ability to persevere through circumstances you could never handle in your own strength. What an exceptional blessing you have in the Holy Spirit!

You Are the Permanent Residence of the Holy Spirit

On His last night before going to the cross, Jesus foreshadowed the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Amazingly, He said it would be better for Him to leave so they could have the Helper—the Holy Spirit: “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7 NIV).

Jesus said that since they had been with Him, they had already experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit. And beginning at Pentecost, though Jesus would be gone from the earth, the Holy Spirit would now be in them. Jesus told them: “The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:17 NIV).

The same is true for you today. When God forgave your sins and saved you, you crossed over from death to life. You received the greatest gift of all, eternal life, when you were forgiven for your sins and became a child of God. At that moment, He gave you a guarantee of eternal inheritance by placing the person of the Holy Spirit in your heart. “When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14 NIV).

You were born again spiritually and received the person of the Holy Spirit to live in you forever. The Holy Spirit now dwells in you, which means He actually lives within you. He doesn’t live in temples built by men, but has instead made your heart His permanent home. As we will explore further in chapter 10, you are now the very temple of the Holy Spirit. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19 NIV).

Jesus promised the disciples, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever” (John 14:16 NIV). He said the Holy Spirit would indwell them forever. And the same is true for you! The Holy Spirit doesn’t come and go as He did in Old Testament times. He is always present and living within you, even when you sin. He’s sealed you as a child of God, and guaranteed your salvation, regardless of your future actions. The Holy Spirit is your new spiritual DNA, and He will never leave you. He has come to lead, teach, comfort, and empower you. You are a new person, forever indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV).

God has given you the person of the Holy Spirit to help you live the life He has planned for you. You lack nothing you need to live a life pleasing to Him now that you have received the Holy Spirit. The Bible says He “poured out” His Holy Spirit on you at the time of your salvation: “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of

his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:4-6 NIV).

God didn't give you the Holy Spirit just so you can be certain you are going to heaven when you die. He gave you the Holy Spirit so you can joyfully be a part of bringing heaven to earth while you live! What a supremely rich blessing He has given you in the person of the Holy Spirit! The key is to learn, by faith, the secrets of keeping in step with the Holy Spirit throughout each day.

Peace Surpassing Human Understanding

What Spills Out When You Are Bumped? We all need the power of the Holy Spirit for when life “spills a latte” on us. The majority of your life is not made up of big, dramatic experiences. It consists mostly of smaller daily events and little surprises, both good and bad. Life has its share of unexpected annoyances and disappointments. But if you are led by the Spirit, you can handle these undesirable events joyfully. The world is watching to see how you, as a follower of Jesus, react when life disappoints you.

“The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:5-7 NIV).

These are the words the apostle Paul penned to the Philippian church while under house arrest and chained to a Roman guard. Despite his circumstances, he was filled with peace rather than anxiety because he had prayed and surrendered his life and its difficulties to God. He was not only instructing the Philippian church and us, but also giving us an example of how he was personally thriving in the midst of unjust imprisonment.

He had an inner tranquility that was beyond human understanding. Because you have within you the same Holy Spirit Paul had, that same tranquility is available to you today. It isn't just peace from God, it is the peace of God. The indwelling Spirit's peace is not always explainable, but it is always available to you as you ask Him for it.

Your Life in the Spirit

The Bible describes your life with the Holy Spirit in many ways, such as being filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit, living in the Spirit, and others. They all mean the same thing—living by the power of the Holy Spirit and not our own, flawed flesh. They all result in experiencing and exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit.

Now that you have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit forever, the question constantly before you is: How much of the time are you living in the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit? That is, what percentage of the time are you living in the flesh in Level II, and what percentage of the time are you living as He intends you to live, in the power and presence of the Spirit in Level III?

The objective of the remainder of this series is to help you greatly increase the amount of time you live empowered by the Holy Spirit. God desires for you to live a life pleasing to Him and influential to others. He wants your life to have meaning and purpose and has given you the Holy Spirit to guide, teach, and empower you in your journey!

ABIDING TRUTH: When you walk in the Spirit, you will experience love, joy, and peace.

Reflection Question

What are some of the ways you've already adopted to walk in the Spirit so you can experience more of the Holy Spirit's joy and peace? Why is it important for us as believers to build habits that push us to remember the Holy Spirit's presence? What new habits do you sense the Holy Spirit is giving you to begin?

Write down your answer to the box below ("Your Response or Question") and send it to us. It will appear in Messages.