

YOU CAN FIND JOY IN SERVING GOD

Note to the speaker:

Give the audience a good reason for displaying a joyful spirit in spite of the problems of life. Show how joy, a fruit of God's spirit, is inseparably linked to knowing God and serving him

MAN'S DESIRE AND EFFORTS TO FIND JOY (5 min.)

Every normal person wants to be joyful. The world offers little reason for joy: terrorism, ethnic strife, crime, disease, and the like, are rampant in the world

Example: "Terrorism has become a pitiless war without borders," stated one government official (*g86 6/22 3*)
In 1971, fewer than two dozen persons died in terrorist attacks; in 1983, over 10,000; and now ethnic conflicts and terrorism are the order of the day (*g86 6/22 3; g93 12/22 4-5*)

The world tries to find joy in sports, TV viewing, pleasure trips, materialism, loose life-style

Big business exploits modern technology to create and then fill artificial needs

This frantic race for the joy that man so desires brings no lasting satisfaction. It is all self-defeating selfishness, ending in the dust of the grave (1Ti 6:9, 10; Ga 6:7, 8; Job 17:13, 16)

GOD COMMANDS HIS SERVANTS TO REJOICE (8 min.)

(For this and next subheading, see *w95 1/15 10-15*)

Though some believe it is elusive, joy is possible in this wicked world

Consider Jesus' example (Heb 12:2)

To serve God, Paul says that early Christians "joyfully took the plundering of [their] belongings" (Heb 10:32-34)

There is a spirit in man that has needs beyond material things

Unless these needs are met, no contentment, no joy results. Needs of body and spirit must be met—a balance (Mt 4:4; 5:3)

God's people always have reason to rejoice (Php 4:4; 1Th 5:16)

Joy comes from being spiritual. Can the joy from material possessions compare with the joy derived from our worldwide brotherhood? Can it compare with a kind thought expressed by a spiritual brother? A sympathetic touch, a soft gesture, a warm smile, or a loving act from one you love? A feeling that you really belong to God's family and that he cares for you in your moments of need? This fine relationship with your brothers and Jehovah, the happy God, is what fills you with joy. Jehovah exhorts: "Rejoice in the hope" (Ro 12:12)

GODLY JOY NOT DEPENDENT ON EXTERNAL THINGS (12 min.)

One definition of joy: "A state of happiness" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*)

Joy is not just a matter of feeling but is a quality of the heart (Pr 17:22; Ec 2:10)

Is a deep inner sense of delight based on principles and so is lasting

Life and joy not dependent on material things (Lu 12:15; Mt 13:44) (Contrast with unhappy, materialistic world)

Joy is a fruit of the spirit (Ga 5:22)

Knowledge of truth a basis for joy

Understanding God's purpose gives meaning to life, without which we are like "stars with no set course" (Jude 13)

The truth liberates one from "Babylon the Great," a blessing that brings joy (Re 18:2, 4; Joh 8:32)

Worshippers no longer pray before lifeless images that cannot answer (Ps 115:4-8)

Bible knowledge frees one from fear of eternal torment; frees one from bondage to sin (Ro 8:2); frees one from fear of man (Ps 118:6)

God rewards faithful ones by fulfilling promise of everlasting life (Joh 17:3)

WHY GOD'S SERVANTS CAN FIND JOY IN SERVING HIM (15 min.)

(See *w95 1/15 15-20*)

Helping others brings joy (1Th 2:19, 20)

Early Christians rejoiced when persecuted for preaching. Why? Because their suffering was for sake of righteousness (Mt 5:10; 1Pe 4:13, 14)

We also have weighty responsibility to preach the good news, and we can likewise find joy in serving Jehovah. Joy is experienced by those who serve Jehovah in spite of official bans or restrictions on the Kingdom work (*w91 7/1 31*)

Jehovah's servants rejoice today in serving him with endurance (Jas 1:2-4)

God cares for his servants (Mt 6:31-33)

Example: How he especially sustains the pioneers and those in restricted countries (Heb 13:5, 6)

God's servants find joy through fine association with faithful brothers at meetings, in field service, and in wholesome recreation (Ps 133:1; Heb 10:23-25)

To be a part of the worldwide family of Jehovah's worshipers should thrill us! In this world filled with wickedness, how refreshing to associate with brothers who have put on the new personality! (Col 3:8-11) This new personality results in being honest (*w91 6/15 26*, experience from Corsica; *w93 5/1 27*)

Think of when the whole world will be that honest!

Great joy results from making God's heart glad and being assured that he rewards his servants (Pr 27:11; Heb 6:10)

ONLY WORTHWHILE ACTIVITY IS SERVING JEHOVAH (5 min.)

Rewarding both for life now and for that to come (1Ti 4:8)

Store up treasures for everlasting life of joy (Mt 6:20; 1Ti 6:19)

So continue to "serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry" (Ps 100:2)

Truly, "the joy of Jehovah is your stronghold" (Ne 8:10)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read)