

SERVE JEHOVAH WITH A JOYFUL HEART

Note to the speaker:

Show how godly joy can overshadow life's trials and help us have an optimistic outlook. Keep in mind that some in the audience may be undergoing trials. Avoid condemnatory statements. Be empathetic and uplifting

JEHOVAH WANTS HIS SERVANTS TO BE JOYFUL (5 min.)

Jehovah is "the happy God" (1Ti 1:11)

He wants his servants to be joyful (Php 4:4)

Does not mean that his people will be in a perpetual state of jubilation but that in even worst of circumstances, can find joy in serving Jehovah

Joy is a fruit of God's spirit (Ga 5:22, 23; 1Th 1:6)

One who has God's spirit can be joyful

Joy derived from good health, youth, and pleasures, and from money and other material things can be short-lived

Solomon found no lasting joy from these (Ec 2:1, 2, 4-8, 11)

In contrast, friendship with God is a source of lasting joy (Ps 64:10)

SERVING JEHOVAH GOD IS A SOURCE OF JOY (8 min.)

Read and discuss Psalm 100

Psalm 100:1, 2

Triumphant shout shows our expressions of praise should not be weak but should be vigorous, confident as those of a conquering army

We conquer the world by observing God's commandments (1Jo 5:3-5)

Such accomplishment brings joy

Service to God viewed as invigorating and uplifting, not burdensome

Adds meaning to life, helps one cope with life's problems, pressures

Psalm 100:3

Joy comes from knowing him as a person, as God and Creator

Jehovah is like a loving shepherd who cares for his sheep

Psalm 100:4, 5

God's qualities (goodness, kindness, faithfulness) provide incentive to offer him thanks and praise

Jehovah has no taint of badness and can be relied upon to time indefinite

We delight to come into his gates and courtyards (includes going to his place of worship)

We are honored to have him as our God; it brings joy

EXPERIENCES SHOW THAT WE CAN SERVE GOD WITH JOY IN SPITE OF HARDSHIPS (12 min.)

Briefly relate experiences:

Brothers in Ukraine (*w91 1/1 13-14*)

Serving Jehovah in war-torn areas (*w91 1/1 28-9*)

Possible to be joyful in spite of health problems and personal setbacks (*w90 7/15 31; w85 6/15 28*)

Overcoming obstacles in order to preach good news results in joy (*w91 1/1 5*)

(For other experiences see recent *Indexes* under "Field Ministry Experiences")

WHY SOME LOSE THEIR JOY (15 min.)

Some lose joy because of public indifference to the message we preach

Natural to want a positive response, but we need to keep things in perspective

Growing number of unresponsive ones to be expected as end draws near (Isa 6:9-11)

Meditating on why we preach can help us maintain joy

Proclaim good news for a witness (Mt 24:14)

To make known Jehovah's name (Ro 10:13-15)

To sound the warning (Eze 3:17, 19)

Need to remember that some seeds of truth may bear fruit later (Ec 11:6; *w88 7/15 13*)

We will reap if we do not tire out in preaching work (Ga 6:9)

Personality problems can cause one to lose joy

Need to have a balanced view of personalities within Christian congregation (*w89 11/15 15-16*)

Be quick to settle differences so that they do not cause you to lose joy (Mt 5:23, 24; Eph 4:26, 32)

Be forgiving; avoid demanding perfection of others (Mt 6:12, 14, 15)

Not Scriptural to compare self with others or try to compete (1Co 12:14-16, 21)

Need to fight tendency to be jealous over progress and privileges of others or to brag about privileges given us (*w*90 12/1 16; *w*89 10/15 18)

No allowance for rivalry with brothers (Ga 6:4)

Persecution and other trials can cause discouragement

Satan persecutes those who have God's approval (1Pe 4:14)

Having Jehovah's spirit is reason to be happy

Consider benefits of enduring under pressure (Jas 1:2-4)

Rely on Jehovah, who will not abandon you (Ro 8:35, 38, 39)

Trials are temporary (1Co 10:13)

Material things do not bring happiness (Lu 12:15)

Pursuit of material things can bring heartache

Proper attitude toward material things brings contentment (1Ti 6:6-12)

ALLOW JOY TO OVERSHADOW PROBLEMS (3 min.)

Have plenty to do in the work of the Lord (1Co 15:58)

Many who arrange personal affairs to do more in the ministry experience increased joy

Seek out opportunities to do more—full-time service, moving to areas with a greater need, Kingdom Hall construction, and so forth

Brothers should reach out for the privilege of serving as ministerial servants and elders

All can improve in reading and studying theocratic material

ANTICIPATE THE EVERLASTING JOY OF GOD'S KINGDOM (2 min.)

Jesus Christ to bring an end to enemies of God (1Co 15:25, 26)

Blessings of Kingdom rule (Re 21:4)

Surpassing joy for those who have this hope (Ps 100:2; Ro 15:13)

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