

# Joy: "In Him Our Hearts Rejoice"

PSALM 33:1-11,20-22; 1 PETER 1:3-9

**C**hristians often have the reputation of being very serious people, even to the point of gloominess. We speak of sin and judgment, the cross and shed blood. Our awe of God and solemnity in light of the human condition are appropriate. Nevertheless, our lives are supposed to be characterized by joy.

That God approves of his people's being joyful is thoroughly attested to in Scripture. The Israelites came before God with joy in religious festivals. David danced with joy before the Lord. The angels proclaimed a message of "great joy" as they announced Jesus' birth. Jesus lived a life "full of joy through the Holy Spirit" (Luke 10:21). God has given us beauty in nature and love in relationships to stimulate our joy as they mirror for us the invisible attributes of God. And even in suffering we can learn to rejoice in God's grace and presence and in what he will accomplish through it.

1. In what kinds of experiences have you found real joy?

**READ PSALM 33:1-11,20-22.**

2. Who is to sing to the Lord in praise?

3. How are praise and joy related?

4. Do you think it is *always* fitting to praise God?  
Why?

5. The psalmist described several ways of expressing joy in verses 1-3 and 20-21. How do you express joy in your relationship with God?

6. Verses 6 and 7 show God as Creator. Give some examples of how God can use creation to stimulate joy in the believer.

7. What connection does hope have to joy (verses 20-22)?

8. What trustworthy aspects of God's character do you note from this psalm?

How does this knowledge affect your joy as a Christian?

**READ I PETER 1:3-9.**

9. What does our new birth in Christ give us (verses 3-5)?
10. Why could these first-century Christians have joy despite persecution?
11. Why does God sometimes allow Christians to suffer (verses 7-9)?

12. How can Christians retain a joyful faith in difficult times?

What might this kind of joy in the midst of suffering look and feel like?

13. How does your faith compare with the descriptions in this passage and in Psalm 33?

Take some time to pray, asking God to help you grow in a joyful faith.