



## CHOOSE JOY

by Whitney Davis

We live in a culture that often prizes happiness and contentment supreme. We are surrounded by messages encouraging selfish motives for “living our truth” and “finding our happy.” Despite these messages, women experience more loneliness than ever before and are battling the spirit of heaviness in their lives. So, where does the truth lie in our pursuit of finding happiness? The truth lies in something far more significant than happiness- the truth is found as we walk in the joy of the Lord. Nivine Richie with [unlockingthebible.org](http://unlockingthebible.org) shares, “In the English Standard Version of the Bible, the words “joy,” “rejoice,” or “joyful” appear a total of 430 times, compared with “happy” or “happiness,” which appear only ten times.” As women, we will find far greater fulfillment as we experience and walk in joy rather than happiness. Happiness is fickle; it tends to come and go. It is largely dependent on our

circumstances and current state of mind. Let’s explore what it truly means to experience the joy of the Lord.

### 1.) THERE CAN BE JOY DESPITE OUR CIRCUMSTANCES.

*“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.” Habakkuk 3:17-19*

We can be broken, alone, rejected, hurting, and experience lack in this world, yet still be joyful in God

our Savior. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we are redeemed. Our brokenness will be made whole, and all will be made well. Our end isn't determined by the trials we face here on earth. Because we are hidden in Christ, we can rejoice in the Lord and draw on the strength He provides regardless of our journey. It is easy to lose sight and focus on all we don't have. We get caught up in comparing ourselves to others and struggle with feelings of failure. We must keep our eyes on Jesus. The joy we experience in Him satisfies us in the depths of our heart and soul- so much more than mere happiness.

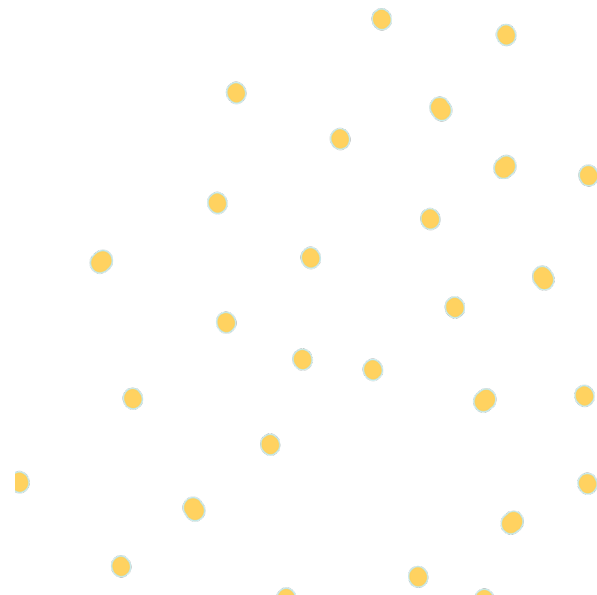
## 2.) IN CHRIST, AN EXCHANGE MAKES JOY POSSIBLE FOR US.

*“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3*

This year we have been exploring how to flourish by being planted firmly in Jesus. As women rooted in Christ, we benefit from His great exchange. His salvation for our sin. His beauty for our ashes. His joy for our mourning. His praise for the heaviness we experience. What a powerful exchange! Though we grieve and mourn, He gives us the oil of joy to sustain us. Though we struggle in the “too-muchness” of life, we can choose to praise Him in those times. Putting on a garment is an action. We get to choose to “put on” praise in our seasons of struggle- this exchange, I believe, leads us to operate in joy rather than despair.

We must be intentional to realize the many ways we can experience joy despite our pain and make an active decision to walk in that joy. It's easy to look at the circumstances around us and feel defeated. But

Christ came that we might have abundant life, and He provides victorious life. Put on the garment of praise today. Accept the oil of joy in exchange for your mourning. Be rooted in Christ so you can experience joy despite the circumstances of life.





### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1.) In what areas of your life are you struggling to find joy?
- 2.) What things make you happy? What makes you joyful?
- 3.) How can you be intentional in seeking a life of joy?
- 4.) Talk about a time when you experienced joy that didn't make sense.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) This week, spend time reflecting and journaling about the ways you are choosing joy each day.
- 2.) If you are in a difficult season, struggling to find joy, reach out to a trusted friend and ask them to pray with you for strength and courage to choose joy despite what you are going through.

**Commit to choose joy this week. Stay rooted in the Word of God and put on the garment of praise daily.**

**MEMORIZE:** "I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights."

Habakkuk 3:18-19

