

The Joy of God

Are you a Joyful Christian?

**If you have no joy in your religion,
there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.**

Billy Sunday

Can we be filled with Joy?

The Story of Princess Elizabeth

Soozie's niece Liz kept asking her father
to read Cinderella over and over.

When he had finally had enough, he gave up trying to satisfy her.

Upset, she called Soozie long distance
and complained,

“Aunt Soozie,
Nobody is trying to make me happy!”

Are we expecting someone to make us happy?

The Philosophy of Peanuts



We are all searching for happiness.

The Philosophy of Peanuts



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Can we truly find it in warm puppy?

The Philosophy of Babies



Happiness is easier to find, but harder to keep

Our Unalienable Rights

From the Declaration of Independence

We hold these Truths to be self-evident,
that all Men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are
Life,
Liberty
and **the pursuit of Happiness.**

Can we claim this as a God-given Right?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Do we pursue it only for ourselves?

Do we pursue it for others?

Do we pursue it for God?

This “Right” is not limited to ourselves

Should we pursue happiness for others?



What if everyone did it?

Is everyone doing their “job”?

Lucy: Why do you think we're put here on earth Charlie Brown?

Charlie Brown: To make others happy.

Lucy: I don't think I'M making anyone very happy.

Of course nobody's making ME very happy either.

SOMEBODY'S NOT DOING HIS JOB!

We expect that others should make us happy!

What is your definition of Joy?

Joy: A state of Happiness.

(Merriam Webster)

We spend a lot of effort trying to make ourselves happy.

**We are searching for JOY,
which is not really a temporary thing,
but more of a steady state.**

What gives you Joy?

We should be spreading Joy around

The Golden Rule:

Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7:12)

The Greatest Commandments:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

(Matthew 22:37-39)

May the Lord make your love **increase** and **overflow**

for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

(1 Thessalonians 3:12)

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us **do good to all people**,
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

(Galatians 6:10)

What about God?

What do we think about concerning the Joy of God?

What Bible verses do you know of that refer to God being in a state of Joy?

**Do we wonder if God is happy?
Or if we are making Him happy?**

**Do we just assume that He is,
and don't think that we can give Him joy.**

How does God feel when you do Good?

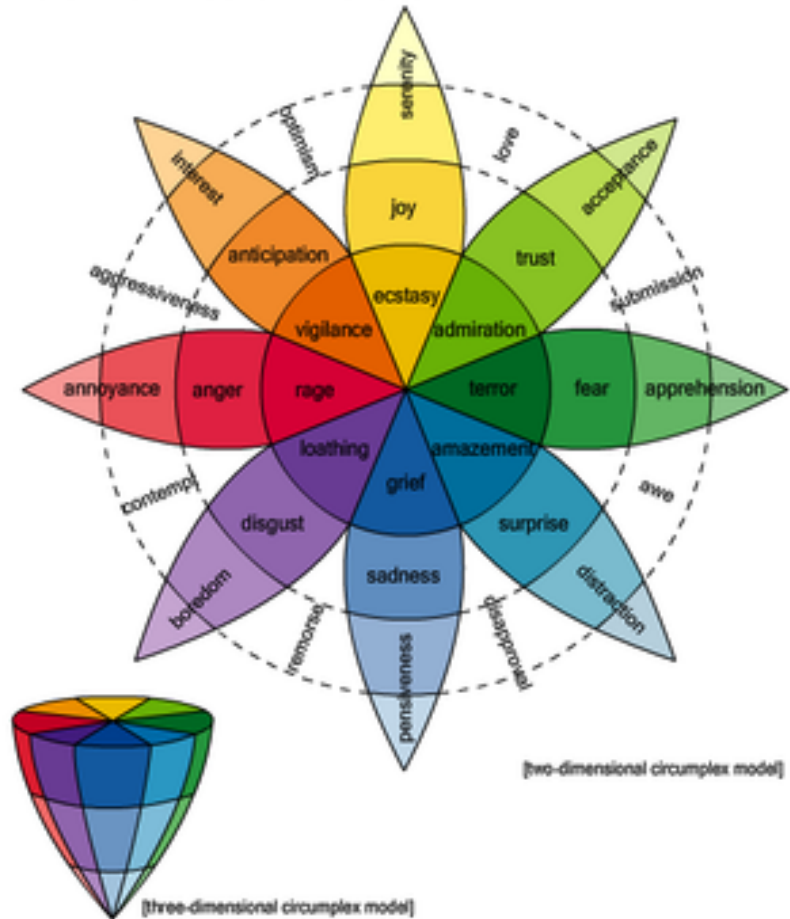
What gives God Joy?

Does God have Emotions?

We assume that our souls, with emotions, are modeled on God, for we were made “in His image”.

Basic emotion	Basic opposite
Joy	Sadness
Trust	Distrust
X Fear	Anger
X Surprise	Anticipation

Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions



Does God have all of these emotions?

Which of God's emotions are we more familiar with?

Do not follow other gods,
the gods of the peoples around you;
for the LORD your God,
who is among you,
is a jealous God and his **anger** will burn against you,
and he will destroy you from the face of the land.

Deuteronomy 6:14-16

Now we who have believed enter that rest,
just as God has said,
"So I declared on oath in my **anger**,
'They shall never enter my rest.'

Hebrews 4:3

God speaks of his Love, but not so much about His Joy.

What does it take to please God?

The main way to see God's Joy is to see what Pleases Him.

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever **pleases** him. Psalm 115:3

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was **pleased** through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 1 Corinthians 1:21

For God was **pleased** to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:19-20

God's Plan for Mankind

What can man do to please God?

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are **pleased** with integrity.
1 Chronicles 29:17

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and **pleasing** to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.
Romans 12:1

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is **pleasing** to God... Romans 14:17-19

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may **please him in every way**: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...
Colossians 1:10

I urge... that we may live... in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and **pleases** God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
1 Timothy 2:1-4

And without faith it is impossible to **please** God... Hebrews 11:6

God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy.

C.S. Lewis

Our own lives are filled then with Joy

... the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your **joy** will be complete.

Deuteronomy 16:15

And on that day they offered great sacrifices, **rejoicing** because God had given them great **joy**. The women and children also **rejoiced**. The sound of **rejoicing** in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

Nehemiah 12:43

You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of **joy**.

Psalms 45:7 and Hebrews 1:9

But may the righteous be glad and **rejoice** before God; may they be happy and **joyful**.

Psalms 68:3

The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with **joy** because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole family.

Acts 16:34

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and **joy** in the Holy Spirit...

Romans 14:17

Examples of God's Joy (or Pleasure)

Creation (birth of the universe and man): God said that it was Good
Enoch was taken to heaven because he pleased God (Hebrews 11:5)

God bragging about Job before Satan

God was pleased with David, who was a man after His own heart.

“Glory in the highest” when Jesus was born

Also the voice at His baptism, transfiguration, etc

Jesus' pride in the woman who gave her all (two mites)

The Holy Spirit filling the room on Pentecost

Glory at the ascension; receiving His Son home again

**Joy in heaven (with God) when one turns to Him: There will be more
rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-
nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Luke 15:7**

The father embracing the returning Prodigal Son

Joy in ultimate victory (Revelation)

Evidence of Joy

**There are many physical signs of human happiness and joy:
higher rates in vital signs
tears, and getting “choked up”
laughter (though not always a clear sign of joy)**

**There is no billboard or huge electronic video screen that shows it:
What if there was:
Would joy look like a fireworks display?
The Aurora?
A dynamic rainbow or color wheel?**

**Poetic:
Are raindrops the tears of God?
Are lightning and thunder His anger?

We would like more direct signs of His Pleasure.
Though we have the proof of His Love (Christ on the Cross)**

Do we perceive God as full of Joy?

**We do not easily think of God as joyous,
and consequently our theologies are stilted and barren.**

George Buttrick

Is absurd to think of God's Happiness?

**I remember the amazement and surprise at seeing my Dad
in a meeting of his amateur radio buddies;
full of joy and laughing his head off.**

Who took my father and replaced him with this imposter?

I also caught him singing one time.

**In a similar way,
would it amaze us to think of the unconstrained joy of God?**

Do we limit our sense of Joy in God?

Consider the Joy of Christ

Joy in coming to be with us; wanting to be with us.

**Joy (through the cross)
in knowing that He is saving mankind.**

Joy at the completion of His work on earth (It is finished).

Consider the Joy of Christ

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the **joy** set before him endured the cross,
scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:2

'He himself endured a cross...because of the **joy** he knew would follow'
Hebrews 12.2 (Phillips)

There is no easy way.
Only when we have gone 'to the cross'
can we know the **joy** of victory.

Charlie Shedd

Joy may be more complex than we would like to think.

Trying to Please God

It is a struggle to please God if you don't know what He wants.
We must continually try to determine what that is.

So we make it our goal to **please** him,
whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
2 Corinthians 5:9

Live as children of light
(for the fruit of the light consists
in all goodness, righteousness and truth)
and find out what **pleases** the Lord.
Ephesians 5:8-10

We must continually think about what God wants.

Early Attempt to Please God

Worship is intimately connected with God's (and man's) Joy.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.

But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.

So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Genesis 4:2-5

Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD ?

To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

1 Samuel 15:22

Sacrificial offerings are not the whole story.

Misguided Attempts to Please a False God (1)

Man can get frantic trying to figure out how to please

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you.

Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire."

So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon.

"O Baal, answer us!" they shouted.

But there was no response; no one answered.

And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."

So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed.

Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

1 Kings 18:25-29

Misguided Attempts to Please a False God (2)

Man can get frantic trying to figure out how to please

**When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him,
he took with him seven hundred swordsmen
to break through to the king of Edom,
but they failed.**

**Then he took his firstborn son,
who was to succeed him as king,
and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall.**

**The fury against Israel was great;
they withdrew and returned to their own land.**

2 Kings 3:26-27

They did not know the True God, or what He truly wants.

Bringing an Offering of Love

We make offerings to those that we love.

This must be a free offering;

it is not like a deposit in our bank account (that we withdraw later)

It must be a thoughtful and appropriate offering;

(not like giving a blender to our wife for an anniversary)

Bringing an Offering of Love

We make offerings to those that we love.



Soozie is given tribute pictures all of the time by her little students.

Bringing an Offering of Love

A little gift can many times turn away anger (and/or bring joy).

**A parent's suspicion
is that you want something
if you are being unusually sweet.**

Stop bringing meaningless offerings!

Isaiah 1:13

Our offering must be genuine.

The Joy that can't be Taken Away

God can give us “permanent” joy.

I tell you the truth,
you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.

You will grieve,
but **your grief will turn to joy.**

A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come;
but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish
because of her **joy** that a child is born into the world.

So with you:
Now is your time of grief,
but I will see you again and you will **rejoice**,
and **no one will take away your joy.**

John 16:20-22

What greater joy is there than in loving relationships?

The Ultimate Joy is not just Absence of Evil

It is intimately connected with Good

Popular Christian devotion has perhaps concentrated too much on the negative joys of heaven, that is, on the promises of the Revelation that there will be no more hunger or thirst, no more scorching heat or sunstroke, no more tears or pain, no more night, nor more curse, no more death.

Thank God for these absences.

But thank God even more for their cause, namely the presence -- the central, dominating presence -- of the throne of God.

John Stott

The Greatest Joy is God's Ultimate Victory!