



# moms monthly

support encourage share grow

## joy

What is the difference between happiness and joy?

In what ways do you feel your life is characterized by joy?

What do you admire about joyful people?

What impact does rejoicing have on you and your family?

### Is joy your middle name?

I am often surprised at the type of commands found in Scripture.

For example, we are told to “rejoice in the Lord always”. And (in case we didn’t get it the first time) the writer “[says] it again: Re-joice!” (Philippians 4:4) We are exhorted to be joyful. Always.

So, what is the deal with joy? Why should it matter if we are actively “rejoicing”? Sometimes we just don’t feel like it. When we don’t feel joyful, we are faced with two distinct problems.

The first issue is obedience. If

we follow God’s direction for our lives only when we feel like it we are setting ourselves up for failure. If we feel like murdering someone, it doesn’t make it right to do so. In the same way, if we don’t feel like being joyful, we still ought to obey. God gives us instruction for our good. We get a glimpse of who we were created to be when we enjoy our lives. We are designed for delight.

The second concern is the source of our pleasure. At Christmas we sing *Joy to the World* not *Joy of the World*. That is simply because Jesus is to be our joy. All our pleasure and happiness is to be derived

from our relationship with Him and our ability to recognize Him as the giver of good gifts. The happiness that the world offers has no permanence. It is fleeting because it is dependent on circumstances. And though our circumstances may not always make us happy they shouldn’t steal our joy. Not if our joy is of the Lord. In fact, it is precisely our joy that will give us the strength to face those hard times.

Joy is a part of our inheritance as children of God. He says that his joy is in us (John 15:11). It makes us who we are.

Our names our significant to our identity. My middle name is Joy, literally. I wonder if I am sharing that identity with the world. Are you?

**Be joyful always.**

*1Thessalonians 5:16*

### Is your joy contagious?



There are people in this world that are seriously joy-challenged. Maybe you are one of them: always gossiping, complaining, criticizing or whining about something. Friends, let’s face it: while we all need to vent our frustrations from time-to-time, we don’t want to become characterized by negativity or pessimism. Joylessness is toxic and it will compromise the quality of our relationships. God desires that our joy be an inspiration. We ought to be people that energize others with our positivity. “Joy-carriers” are people that uplift and encourage. Their mere presence refreshes others and infuses them with vitality. Is your joy contagious? If we’re going to spread something around, why not spread (or catch) a little joy?



**The joy of the Lord is my strength.**  
Nehemiah 8:10



### Coffee Talk

1. How has your experience of God’s love deepened as a result of our discussions?
2. In what ways were you able to show love to your family this past month?
3. What did you learn about the need to show love to yourself?

**Joy is the best makeup.**

*Anne Lamott*

**mommy moment:** Make joy your ally in life. Spend time with a friend, take photos, redecorate a room, take a cooking class, go for a walk: infuse your life with things that delight you. Choose one thing to do this month that will reenergize you and remind you of your joy.



**This Month With Ourselves:**

**EVALUATE:**

**EDUCATE:**

Read John 16: 17-24. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes joy as he is talking with his disciples

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15:11

about his imminent death? Why does he tell them that “no one will take away [their] joy”? What does it mean to have a joy that is “complete”? How do you express that joy in worship and service?

How much of your life is characterized by joy? Do your conversations reflect a joyful heart-attitude and perspective? Do you seek to add joy to the lives of others? To what extent are you inspired by joy and how much do you share it (Philemon 1:7)?

**EXPRESS:**

The dictionary defines joy as “the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satis-

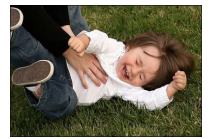
fyng”. When was the last time you felt like that? Write about that experience. What is exceptionally good in your life? What satisfies you on a soul level?

**EXPAND:**

Women of Faith team up in this book to challenge us to live lives full of joy. Through the extended metaphor of a circus, these writers use Scriptural authority, humour and life experience to communicate the importance of joyful Christian living.



**family fun:** Do something this month just for the fun of it! Have a theme party. Go on a spontaneous day trip. Listen to some comedy. Have a tickle fight. Bake a decadent dessert. Watch a sunset. Finger paint. Cuddle up for a whole afternoon to read stories. Be joyful!



**This Month With Our Kids:**

Look to the Psalms for some encouragement (Try Psalms 98 and 100). Smile, clap, dance, sing, shout—do whatever it takes to show your kids (and God) that you know how to rejoice. You will encourage others with your enthusiasm and boldness.

**MAKE A POINT:**

Do things that make your kids laugh and giggle with them. If it means making a fool of yourself to bring them joy, do it! Read stories aloud using silly voices. A silly face, a funny voice or a playful gesture can do a lot for the atmosphere in your home.



**MAKE A PROMISE:**

Decide to be a family that worships joyfully. Set the example for your kids and express your joy without apology or fear.

**MAKE A PLAN:**

Keep your smiles. A small notebook is a great place to write down those random comments that delight. Look at them on occasion to remind you of the everyday joy of children. Say thanks.

**I think the time has come, strange as it sounds, for us to take joy seriously.**  
**John Ortberg**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23**

**Do Less, EnJOY More!**

We are often so hurried in our daily routines that we miss opportunities to really enjoy life. We tend to rush from one event to the next without taking the time to look forward to it or to reflect upon it. Perhaps it is time to slow down long enough to recognize the joy that is available to us on a regular basis. We might be missing it!

How could you maximize your joy?

- Intentionally linger in the acts of anticipation and remembrance.
- Retell stories and jokes from past experiences.
- Look at photos, frame them, post them on Facebook, make a scrapbook or collage.
- Keep a simple written record of memo-



orable moments: a photo journal, a blog or a baby book.

- Plan things like parties and vacations in advance and enjoy the choices and excitement leading up to the event.
- Choose your activities carefully. Weed out the draining things and focus on making joyful memories.
- Value relationships over materialism.