



Can I Have Joy In My Life?

R.C. Sproul

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Joy is a popular topic in Western culture today. Books explain how to find joy in a wide variety of activities. We speak of “joyous” occasions such as weddings and births. We sing about “Joy to the World” at Christmas. “Joy” remains a popular name for girls. But given the extent to which joy seems to be on our minds, few people seem to have it or even know what it is.

In this Crucial Questions booklet, Dr. R.C. Sproul cuts through the confusion surrounding this popular but misunderstood attribute, showing the one sure path to deep, lasting joy—a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. By abiding in Christ, Dr. Sproul shows, we may experience fullness of joy—a joy that transcends unhappy circumstances and even permits us to rejoice with others because of the blessed hope Christ provides.

Can I Have Joy In My Life? Details

Date : Published November 21st 2012 by Reformation Trust Publishing (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : R.C. Sproul

Format : Kindle Edition 66 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Christian, Christian Living, Nonfiction, Christianity

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From Reader Review Can I Have Joy In My Life? for online ebook

Crystal Rose says

“The key to the Christian’s joy is its source, which is the Lord. If Christ is in me and I am in Him, that relationship is not a sometimes experience. The Christian is always in the Lord and the Lord is always in the Christian, and that is always a reason for joy. Even if the Christian cannot rejoice in his circumstances, if he finds himself passing through pain, sorrow, or grief, he still can rejoice in Christ. We rejoice in the Lord, and since He never leaves us or forsakes us, we can rejoice always.”

Excerpt From: R. C. Sproul. “Can I Have Joy in My Life?.”

Wesley Rea says

This one definitely felt a bit more practical than the other books in this series that I've read. Sproul tackles the subject of joy in a way that helped me appreciate the difference between having joy in what Christ has done versus joy in a purely emotional, non-reflective sense.

All in all, though, I don't feel that this book is as meaty as the others. My attention wasn't grabbed as much as the Lord's Supper book because the illustrations felt more anecdotal and less helpful than others I've read. Still, I think it is a worthwhile book for Christians to read, especially for those struggling to find joy in their circumstances.

Pavel Espinal says

This book is easy to read, centered to the main topic, and realistic.

The author reminds us what is (and what isn't) joy, the reality about joy being something we can strive to have.

It is encouraging the fact that the author does not deny the reality of life, neither does he think we are some kind of super-Christian who will never experience grief and suffering.

The author points us to the source of joy in a biblical way and examines the joy as a result of being born again.

Some questions that will be answered:

What is joy?

- Is it OK to be sad because something happened to me?
 - Can I do something to be joyful?
 - Is it really true that joy and pain can coexist?
 - If there's something that can automatically kill joy, what is it?
- etc.

I would strongly recommend this short book. It's very possible that I'll be re-reading it and taking notes.

Benedict Tan says

The book in 5 quotes:

- 1) The book essentially talks about 'how we can be joyful as a matter of discipline or of the will' (p. 5).
 - 2) 'In simple terms, this means that the Christian life is not to be marked by dourness or a miserable attitude. We all have bad days, but the basic characteristic of a Christian personality is joy (p. 6).'
 - 3) 'It is anxiety that robs us of our joy. And what is anxiety but fear? Fear is the enemy of joy. It is hard to be joyful when we are afraid' (p. 9).
 - 4) '[On Romans 8] 'Paul's counsel, as we go through those periods, is to remember that God has put a time limit on our pain, and that after that time we will enter a condition wherein pain will be no more' (p. 15).
 - 5) 'Our joy is to come from the assurance that we have redemption in Christ. The greatest joy that a person can have is to know that his name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he is saved and will live forever with Christ' (p. 36).
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Amy says

I liked it because sometimes even Christians need to be reminded where true joy comes from. It does not just come from those happy times and circumstance. Joy can be found even in unhappy situations. It is not about always getting our way and what we want. It is about being joyful when others are doing well and are happy. It is about helping others and serving God in what you do. True joy ultimately comes from God when you abide with him.

Randall Hartman says

Joy IS Possible God's Way

Having personally suffered a lack of joy - indeed, anxiety and depression far too often - I have looked a great deal for sound, godly counsel on dealing with these unwelcome and undesired periods. Sproul's book concisely and powerfully traces the Biblical reality of joy to its source and applies it to the real-life circumstances of those who follow Jesus.

The Bible commands the Christian to have joy despite our circumstances. This is possible because, as Sproul explains, the source of our joy is the Lord; the enemy of joy is anxiety; the reason for our joy is trust in God who controls all things; the focus of our joy is heaven when joy will be completely realized; the foundation of our joy is the assurance of our redemption in Christ; the fulness of our joy in this life comes from staying close to Christ through His word and prayer; and the outworking of our joy is a life lived for Jesus first, others second, and ourselves last.

This prescription is so much more effective than the world's platitudes or futile solutions. While not minimizing that legitimate medical conditions requiring medication may underlie a lack of joy, the world often confuses joy with happiness, misunderstanding the symptoms and thus misdiagnosing the problem. True joy comes from clearly understanding the fundamental reasons it is lacking and applying effective treatment from the Great Physician.

Timothy Coplin says

True Christian joy is defined, exemplified, and instructed upon.

Joy can be had, and is to be had in good times and bad; triumph and trial.

Guilt is contrasted to joy.

Pleasure is contrasted to joy.

And abiding life in Christ is shown to be foundational to experiencing joy, and to experiencing joy always.

Sproul has a way of taking you out to the deep end of the pool without you realizing you've left the shallow end. This treatise doesn't go all the way to the deep end, but certainly take you out toward the center line.

Caleb Allen says

This is a helpful book for gaining a Biblical view of joy. Dr. Sproul also provided several passages of Scripture where joy is addressed.

Becky says

First sentence: The word joy appears over and over again in the Scriptures. For instance, the Psalms are filled with references to joy.

R.C. Sproul's *Can I Have Joy In My Life* is a must-read in my opinion. I don't say that lightly. The subject is of the utmost importance for believers. Perhaps it's not of the utmost importance for unbelievers: these words, these promises, are for believers. But the undercurrent is that one cannot have joy without having the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the source of our joy, the founder of our faith. Sproul writes, "Our joy is to come from the assurance that we have redemption in Christ. The greatest joy that a person can have is to know that his name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he is saved and will live forever with Christ."

Joy is not to be confused with happiness. The source of our joy is in the LORD Jesus, not in our circumstances. Whether things be going our way, or far, far from it--joy is possible because a believer will always, always have the Lord.

Sproul writes,

"Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4a). This is one of those biblical imperatives, and it leaves no room for not rejoicing, for Paul says Christians are to rejoice always—not sometimes, periodically, or occasionally. The key to the Christian's joy is its source, which is the Lord. If Christ is in me and I am in Him, that relationship is not a sometimes experience. The Christian is always in the Lord and the Lord is always in the Christian, and that is always a reason for joy. Even if the Christian cannot rejoice in his circumstances, if he finds himself passing through pain, sorrow, or grief, he still can rejoice in Christ. We rejoice in the Lord, and since He never leaves us or forsakes us, we can rejoice always.

Let those words sink in. Read them again, and then again. Do you see now why I said this book was a must-

read?!

Here's another gem:

When we find ourselves depressed, down, irritated, annoyed, or otherwise unhappy, we need to return to the source of our joy, and then we will see those circumstances that are sapping our joy in perspective. The circumstances of this life will pale into insignificance when compared to that which we have received from God. When I have things in perspective, I know that if I never experienced another blessing in my entire life other than the blessings I already have received from the hand of God, I would have no possible reason to be anything but overflowing with joy until the day I die. God has already given me so much to be thankful for, so much to provoke my soul to delight, gladness, and joy, that I should be able to live on the basis of that surplus of blessedness and remain joyful all of my days.

But the book isn't just about ourselves: finding joy, discovering joy, being joyous. It's also about OTHERS.

The Bible tells us, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). That is one of the key principles of joy. It teaches us that our joy is not to be restricted to our own circumstances or our own achievements, but that we ought to be able to feel joy for other people, for their achievements, for their successes, and for their bounty. By the same token, we are called to enter other people's sorrow. This is what we call empathy, which involves feeling what others feel. Jesus Himself exemplified this virtue. How else can we explain the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35)?

and

In the first year I was a Christian, I learned a simple acrostic with respect to the word joy. It taught that the letters that make up the word joy stand for "Jesus," "others," and "yourself," and the lesson was that the secret to joy is to put Jesus first, others second, and yourself third.

This may just be my favorite of the Crucial Questions series so far.

Michael Boling says

Having joy in your life is certainly the preferable choice for most people. Furthermore, the issue of joy is one Scripture speaks to on numerous occasions. However, due to what life brings our way, whether issues of our own doing or due to the actions of others, joy seems to be a fleeting thing for many of us. How do we maintain our joy in the midst of what seems to be a never ending avalanche of what can be properly termed as real life? Dr. R. C. Sproul, in book 12 of the Crucial Questions series called Can I Have Joy in My Life?, discusses the issue of joy, where it comes from and how one can have joy in their life regardless of the situation they find themselves in.

Sproul rightly notes at the outset of this book the biblical definition of joy has been greatly impacted by our cultural understanding of joy. For instance, the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5 which begin with the word blessed have been taken on occasion to connote the idea of happiness. In actuality, as noted by Sproul, the Greek word translated as blessed "communicates not only the idea of happiness but also profound peace, comfort, stability, and great joy." The Apostle Paul, in Philippians 4 declares the believer is to rejoice in the

Lord always” followed by the “again, I say rejoice.” Sproul rightly notes this is not a suggestion but a command, one that clearly provides the source of our joy, the Lord. We can rejoice in the Lord because as Sproul aptly comments, “since He never leaves us or forsakes us, we can rejoice always.” So even on the worst of days, we can find joy in the Lord who is our ever present help in time of trouble.

Since joy is not an option, how do we go about counting it all joy in the midst of life’s proverbial ups and downs? As this is the where the rubber meets the road aspect of this issue, Sproul spends a great deal of time elaborating and examining what Scripture has to say in regards to how to have joy in life. The Apostle James commands the believer to count it all joy with the word translated as count carrying “the idea of reckoning, considering, or deeming.” Thus, James is declaring that “even when we do not feel joyful about a trial we are enduring, we must count it – that is, consider it – as a matter of joy.” Scripture certainly recognizes that in this life, we will have trouble. With that said, we can have joy because our focus is not on the immediate situation. We can have great confidence that God is working for the good what takes place in our life for His glory. As Sproul so wonderfully states, “The temporal moments of anguish and suffering that we go through are as nothing compared with the joy that has been laid up for us in heaven.” This is an important statement to make. Our focus in the midst of trial should be that of the Psalmist, recognizing God knows what He is doing and that heaven is our ultimate destination.

Thus, the supreme idea of joy we should have comes “from the assurance that we have redemption in Christ. The greatest joy that a person can have is to know that his name is written in the Lamb’s book of life, that he is saved and will live forever with Christ.” This statement by Sproul encapsulates the method by which the believer can find joy. We have joy because we know that no matter what takes place in this life, despite all the good, the bad, and the ugly that takes place, one day all of this mess will be fixed and we will live for eternity with our Lord. With that as the focus of the believer, joy can be something that is not only found, but something that finds its way into our lives no matter what happens. In Christ, we truly can have fullness of joy and we can in turn share this joy with a hurting and lost world.

Can we find joy in our life? The answer provided by R. C. Sproul in his excellent book is a resounding yes. If you are having trouble understanding why you are being seemingly robbed of joy in your life, this book is for you. It will assist you in reorienting your focus to Christ, the source of our confidence and joy. If you have people in your life who may not understand where the joy in your life is coming from, this is a book to hand to them as it will help them understand where true joy stems from.

I received this for free for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Val says

Great devotional read--and short enough to read and digest in one sitting.

Fred says

Eh! Not great, not terrible. Just OK.

I think this is what happens when non-Charismatics write about this subject. The how's and why's the Holy

Spirit brings us joy even in suffering was, sadly, lacking here.

This book made me joyful that I'm BOTH Reformed AND Charismatic. I have heard far, far, far sermons from Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, and Jack Hayford on this subject that actually caused the Holy Spirit to well up inside me and bring me joy. I'm also going to see if R.T. Kendall has a book on this subject, reading Kendall has this effect on me too. Sadly. Dr. Sproul - who despite this less than glowing review, I adore - doesn't.

Not R.C. at his best I'm afraid.

John Yelverton says

This is a very powerful little book, and R.C. Sproul addresses two very specific points about the subject of joy. The first is that for a Christian to not be joyful, when we are commanded to be so, is to disobey God. The second, is that there's a great difference between joy and pleasure. These points are so powerful and the way they are presented are both succinct and jaw dropping in the way they confront the fact that most of us have no idea what joy actually is, let alone what it means to live a joyful and joyous life.

Heather says

"The heart of the New Testament concept is this: a person can have biblical joy even when he is mourning, suffering, or under going difficult circumstances...Even if the Christian cannot rejoice in his circumstances, if he finds himself passing through pain, sorrow, or grief, he can rejoice in Christ. We rejoice in the Lord, and since He never leaves us or forsakes u, we can rejoice always."

"It is anxiety that robs us of our joy. And what is anxiety but fear? Fear is the enemy of joy. It is hard to be joyful when we are afraid. The prohibition that Jesus gave more than any other in all of His teaching was 'Fear not.' This, too, is an imperative, and again, the only solution is to go back to our Father. We need to go to Him in prayer, to fellowship with Him. In this way, we stay close to the source of our joy. We shed our anxieties, and the fruit of the Spirit ripens in us again. If we understand who Christ is and what He has done for us, we have a new dimension of joy."

Randall Hartman says

Having personally suffered a lack of joy - indeed, anxiety and depression far too often - I have looked a great deal for sound, godly counsel on dealing with these unwelcome and undesired periods. Sproul's book concisely and powerfully traces the Biblical reality of joy to its source and applies it to the real-life circumstances of those who follow Jesus.

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others second, and ourselves last.

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