

# Joy

**SOME OF MY FAVORITE** moments enjoying God's creation happen in moments of joy, such as gulls seem to experience on really windy days. They fight to fly into the wind, wait a moment, then ride the winds at high speed back over the water. The gulls do this over and over again. While there might be a different explanation, I like to think of this behavior as them simply having fun. Once I witnessed four warhog piglets, under the watchful eye of their mother, burst out of the grass, look at each other, and gleefully run back and forth together with what seemed to be little smiles on their faces. To me these are more than just moments of play. They are moments of joy. If you watch closely, you can see many moments of joy in creation. Sometimes creation can bring us joy, and sometimes you can see joy happening for other parts of creation.

But what does "joy" mean? Is it being happy? Is it having fun? Is it laughing together? It's more than just happiness or fun or laughing. It happens in moments of happiness, when you feel safe. It's often unplanned. It frequently happens with others around; it's something that is shared. Joy combines a feeling of happiness with a sense of contentment, that everything is all right.


The Bible mentions joy a lot—more than 200 times! Why does the Bible talk about joy? Trusting in God and knowing God is with us give a sense of peace or safety, just like the young warhogs who felt safe to be silly and enjoy each other's company knowing they were under the watchful eyes of their mother, or like the gulls spending time enjoying each other's company and playing with the wind.

In Galatians 5, Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit, or ways of acting that come from a relationship with God. One of them is joy. Knowing that God is there and cares for us gives us the freedom to truly enjoy moments, whether those moments are with creation, with others, or with God.

### Dig Deeper

Read Psalm 126:2-3, Romans 15:13, and Galatians 5:22-23. What do these verses say about joy? What do they have in common?

### Try This!

Think about things that make you happy. Then try to think of times you felt joy. What makes them different? 



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