

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Nehemiah 8:8-12

They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage. ⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, “Don’t mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God.” For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. ¹⁰ And Nehemiah continued, “Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!” ¹¹ And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, “Hush! Don’t weep! For this is a sacred day.” ¹² So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God’s words and understood them.

2017: THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH

1. Find Your STRENGTH

STRENGTH: mountain stronghold, fortress, place of refuge

James 1:2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

2. Discover the JOY of the LORD

JOY: The emotion of great happiness & pleasure

Nehemiah 8:10

“This is a sacred day before our Lord (God). Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD (Yahweh) is your strength!”

3. Worship Instead of Worry

Matthew 6:31-34

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and

live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. ³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV)

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.