

JOY

What is Joy? It's a short word. It's sort of cruel to give such a little word so much depth. Let's give j-o-y a break and see what those Greeks have to say on the matter...

The word used 58 times in the New Testament is *Xara* [*Chara*], simply defined, "joy or gladness". It is used to describe a wide range of emotion from the feeling one has when finding something that is lost (Matt. 13:44), to the exuberance and wonder Mary had as she raced off to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead! (Matt. 28:8)

There's another Greek word for joy and this one begins to articulate the unexplainable. It is the word *Gallioasiv* [*Agalliasis*] meaning "exultation, *extreme joy*, gladness". It's the word used for the babe "leaping for joy" in Elizabeth's womb. I don't know if babies are capable of choosing "gladness". To me it seems like a powerful reaction to being in the presence of the Desired. This remarkable type of joy seems more awe-inspired...almost uncontrollable. This Joy causes one to worship.

Think of the times you've experienced Joy. Those flashing "glimpses" of what Heaven might be like...the times you've recognized true beauty. Maybe it was a moment while reading, hiking, or singing a song. Perhaps it was in a kind word, a smile, or a hand that was offered you. As soon as you recognized it, it was gone. You wanted it back, but realized that you had no control over its appearances.

In his book *Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis described the moment he was faced with Joy as "... [An] unsatisfied desire which is more desirable than any other satisfaction..." According to Lewis "[Joy] must have the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing...", "[It is] a desire for something 'other' or 'outer'." His point being, we *should* ache for completion. It *should* hurt to realize our joy is unsatisfied. We were created to be whole and as it stands we only get glimpses of what that looks like.

Before you get too bummed out... Picture all of those flashing moments of Joy you've experienced. Now imagine thousands of them hitting the earth at once and flooding our "commonness" with the light of Pure Joy. Complete Joy. It happened, you know. Joy came to our aching world and reminded us that there is Hope now...and Joy to be had again. Joy to the world!

Rom 8:20-23 NLT

21 All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. 22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

Thanks, Mentors, for your service to our Lord. Have a blessed Christmas in Him.

Sarah Kouba
Fireman

