



And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:9-10
NRSV

“Longing for Joy”

December 13 & 15, 2019

“I can think of nothing less pleasurable than a life devoted to pleasure.”
– John D. Rockefeller

An Ancient/Modern Problem: Anhedonia – a feeling of _____.
Anhedonia: A reduced ability to experience pleasure.
Anhedonia is not having anything in your life that can move your _____.

“Despite having more resources of pleasure than ever before in history, we are probably the unhappiest people who have ever lived.” – Arch Hart

Deaths of _____ rose in America 900 percent from 1999-2017. (55-64)
_____ is the thief of joy.

Knowledge without _____ leads to fear, anxiety, and depression.

Our brains aren't built for omniscient awareness of the world's suffering.
– Tristan Harris, *The Center for Humane Technology*

How to Find Joy: Nehemiah 8:9-10

The prophet Ezra urged the people to _____ with friends and family and to send _____ to the poor and to those who could not attend.

It could be, “Joy _____ the Lord is our strength.”

It could be, “Joy _____ the Lord is our strength” including our commitment.

It could be, “God’s strength and protection is our _____.”

Joy to the world, The Lord is come

“The incarnation is about seeing the greatness of Jesus. The little baby is just the beginning of the incarnation. It is a cosmic event that touches the whole universe...bringing a wonderful, ravishing reconciliation.” – Dallas Willard

Joy begins and ends with _____. Psalm 16:11

Joy is a _____ of following Jesus. Mark 12:30-31

Jesus says, _____ is the way to joy. John 15:7-11

Joy is a result of a life guided and powered by the _____. Galatians 5:22

We Can Have Joy Right Where We Are

_____ is in you! 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20

_____ are in Christ! Colossians 3:1-3

Christ is in _____! Colossians 3:3

God will supply your every _____! – Philippians 4:19

Action Steps: _____ exposure to comparison, cruelty, and tragedy.

Engage nature, _____ (weep), gather, _____ the poor.

_____ God. Remember, you are surrounded by _____!