

# How Do We Maintain Joy?

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson emphasizes that maintaining joy in the Lord requires a deep commitment to His Word, continual repentance, and separation from worldly distractions.*

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 6:9, Nehemiah 8:3, Nehemiah 8:6, Nehemiah 8:10, Nehemiah 12:43, Psalm 119:11, John 15:11, Romans 15:13, Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**Topics:** "Joy", "Repentance"

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## Description

David Wilkerson emphasizes that the joy of the Lord is our strength, as illustrated in Nehemiah 8:10, where the Israelites, after returning from Babylonian captivity, were captivated by God's Word. Ezra's powerful preaching led to a deep sense of brokenness and repentance among the people, revealing that true joy is birthed from acknowledging our sins and turning back to God. Wilkerson asserts that maintaining this joy requires a passionate hunger for God's Word, a continual attitude of repentance, and a separation from worldly influences. The sermon encourages believers to embrace these practices to experience the fullness of joy that comes from the Lord. Ultimately, it is through obedience to God's Word that we can sustain our joy.

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## Transcript

"The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). At the time these words were proclaimed, the Israelites had just returned from captivity in Babylon. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people had rebuilt Jerusalem's ruined walls, and now they set their sights on reestablishing the temple and restoring the nation.

The people were hungry to hear the Law of God preached to them and they were fully prepared to submit to the authority of God. Ezra the priest "read from [the Law] in the open square ... from morning until midday ... and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law" (Nehemiah 8:3). What an incredible scene. Ezra preached for five or six hours and no one even noticed the time because they were so totally captivated by God's Word.

At times Ezra was so overcome by what he read, he stopped to "bless the Lord, the great God" (see 8:6). The glory of the Lord came down powerfully, and the people raised their hands in praise to God: "All the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord" (8:6).

An important result of this powerful preaching was a wave of brokenness among the hearers. As they grasped God's Law, they began to repent (6:9). Most Christians never associate joy with repentance, but repentance is actually the mother of all joy in Jesus. I believe the Lord desires to move among his people in the same way today. But it requires a people who are anxious to hear God's Word and obey it.

When we set our hearts to obey God's Word, allowing his Spirit to expose and mortify all sin in our lives, the Lord himself causes us to rejoice. "God had made them rejoice with great joy" (12:43). How do we maintain the joy of the Lord? We do it the same way we obtained his joy in the beginning: First, we love, honor and hunger excitedly for God's Word. Second, we continually walk in repentance. And, third, we separate ourselves from all worldly influences.

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