

# *Reasons to Rejoice*

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**This is the time of year in which almost everybody begins to get happy. Can you think of anyone who does not like spring? There may be some - like people who have allergies, but not too many. What's not to like? The environment around us seems to be springing back to life, giving us a tendency to feel a sense of refreshing and renewal.**

But even in the best of times, some of us tend to struggle to bring back lost joy. Sin has had such a devastating grip on the human race for so long that increasing numbers of people are finding fewer reasons for cheer. Both sin and death officially reigned as rulers until the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To live lives of grace and blessing, we must first understand what sin does to us, and then what Christ did to restore us to peace and joy.

## How Sin Robs Us of Joy

The great preacher, John Wesley, when he was a young boy, asked his mother, Susanna, for a definition of sin. This was her answer: *“Whatever weakens your reasoning, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes away your relish for spiritual things. In short, if anything increases the authority and the power of the flesh over the spirit, that to you becomes sin, however good it is in itself.”*

**James 1:15** shows the subtle process which sin creeps in and steals life from people. **“Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”** (NIV)

We sin when we pursue pleasures that get us off course in the things of God. Ravi Zacharias, a great Christian thinker, gives these guidelines for experiencing pleasure. He shares the following insight: *“Anything that refreshes that does not distract from, diminish, or destroy your ultimate goal is a legitimate pleasure.”*

## What Christ Did to Restore Our Joy

Jesus did what no one else could or would do - He gave His life for His enemies. Hear these words from the book of **Romans 5:6-8** - **“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrated his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** (NIV)

Jesus did much more to get us out of trouble than Adam did to cause our troubles. His work went much further to save us than Adam’s did to condemn us.

## **What Our Natural Response Should Be**

Our joy should be so complete that we should view the hardships, toughness and trials of life as not only small prices to pay, but doorways through which we celebrate what the Lord will bring to every situation in which we find ourselves. We can be filled with calm assurance because sin no longer has the power to reign over us. We can now live under the reign of grace, and rejoice no matter the season of the year!