

# **JOURNEY INTO A FRUIT-FILLED LIFE**

Developing the  
Heart of a Faithful  
Servant

Clark Tatum



Sunset Institute Press

3710 34<sup>th</sup> Street ♦ Lubbock, Texas  
806/788-3280/1 ♦ [extschool@sibi.cc](mailto:extschool@sibi.cc)

**Journey Into A Fruit-Filled Life**

A Study of the Fruit of the Spirit

Copyright © 2020

Sunset Institute Press

Printed and Bound in the

United States of America

All Rights Reserved

All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from  
THE HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®.

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible  
Society.

Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All  
rights reserved.

ISBN 978-0-9600193-7-3

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be  
reproduced in any form without the written permission of  
the author or publisher, including translation.

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	7
1. Servant Hearts are Filled with Love .....	11
2. Servant Hearts are Filled with Joy .....	26
3. Servant Hearts are Filled with Peace .....	41
4. Servant Hearts are Filled with Patience. ....	57
5. Servant Hearts are Filled with Kindness. ....	75
6. Servant Hearts are Filled with Goodness. ....	91
7. Servant Hearts are Filled with Faithfulness. ....	110
8. Servant Hearts are Filled with Gentleness. ....	126
9. Servant Hearts are Filled with Self-control.....	142
10. Servant Hearts are Filled with Fruit.....	157
11. Servant Hearts are Filled with Thanksgiving.....	170
12. Servant Hearts are Filled with Devotion . ....	182
13. Servant Hearts are Filled with Heaven. ....	195

## INTRODUCTION

This *Journey into a Fruit-Filled Life* will assist us to more fully develop the heart of a successful servant. There is a solid connection between the type of fruit we produce and our spiritual success as one of God's faithful servants. Throughout the New Testament the subject of fruit is used as an analogy for a productive, fruitful Christian life. Good fruit is a sign of life and nourishment, and bad fruit is a sign of sickness. As we approach the subject of how we can become successful servants we will be exploring and answering this question: "How can we let the truth of God's Word blossom in our hearts so we can produce a harvest of good fruit?"

We can read in our Bible how good trees will bear good fruit and bad trees will bear bad fruit (Matthew 7:18). There are two verses in Galatians the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter that make up a list of fruit we are to be harvesting in our Christian lives. We will work our way through the entire list of fruit noted in Galatians 5 as we embark on this journey into a fruit-filled life. The Bible reads this way in Galatians 5:22-25, <sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* <sup>23</sup> *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* <sup>24</sup> *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.* <sup>25</sup> *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.* Notice the use of the singular word "fruit" in this passage rather than the plural form. This implies these qualities are to be understood as a group rather than individual pieces of fruit.

The more we saturate ourselves with the fruit of the Spirit and live under the Spirit's teaching in the Word of God, the

more mature we will be in Christ. Christians living by the Spirit serve the Lord together with the primary goal of glorifying God in exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. Colossians 3:23-24, <sup>23</sup> *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,* <sup>24</sup> *since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.* Success as a Christian comes down to our willingness to glorify God in all that we do.

The key to the most profitable, effective, and productive life in the eyes of the Lord boils down to the word “servant.” What should be our attitude when it comes to being a servant? Jesus said it this way in John 12:26, *Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.* We will discover along this journey how the fruit we bear in our lives determines how much drive we have to serve in the likeness of Jesus. Journey with Jesus into servanthood and we will develop a heart filled with the fruit of the Spirit. When we fill our hearts with God’s kind of fruit, we will live an obedient, godly, purposeful, servant driven life.

The apostle told the believers in the church in Corinth, *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain* (1 Corinthians 15:58). Nothing we ever do in the Lord’s service is without value. In Matthew 25 we can read the uplifting words the master shared with two of his servants. He said, *Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!* (Matthew 25:21b).

The King James Version reads, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord* (Matthew 25:21b). Someday we will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and we will want to hear Him say those words to us. What a blessing it will be for successful servants to hear the words “Well Done.” At that point every difficulty, every challenge, every mission of mercy, or act of service we have ever done, no matter how difficult, will be worth it all.

The letter of James has much to say about the subject of wisdom. The idea of wisdom is so important that we can find the word over two-hundred times in the Bible and over fifty times in the Book of Proverbs. James 3:13,17, <sup>13</sup> *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.* <sup>17</sup> *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.* Wisdom is more than just having knowledge and discernment. James 3:13 communicates that wisdom is something that can be seen by the way we live. True wisdom seeks to understand life from God’s perspective and then, by the application of that knowledge, is able to bring forth good fruit.

As we pursue living fruit-filled lives we should understand there is a maturing process that comes from the application of the Scripture that enables us to bear spiritual fruit. Some spiritual fruit, like physical fruit, may take longer; but as we allow God’s Word to penetrate our hearts, we will bear good and lasting fruit. There are some interesting things about physical fruit trees. Some trees like peach and coconut trees

can grow very fast. It is not uncommon for a peach tree in ideal conditions to grow fifteen feet in one year and to produce fruit too. Apple and apricot trees can produce fruit somewhere between two to five years. Plum trees will take three to six years before fruit is seen, and cherry trees take four to seven years.

I am not suggesting it has to take years for a Christian to produce spiritual fruit. My point here is that not all fruit matures equally or necessarily at the same time. However, the purpose of God's design for fruit bearing trees is to produce fruit. Likewise, God has designed His most precious creation (Genesis 1:27) to produce fruit-filled lives. We will need wisdom to yield the spiritual fruit God intends us to develop. The wisdom to develop the heart of a successful servant requires the application of God's wisdom which enables us to steer our lives properly down life's road.

The fruit-filled life will not come about by being guided by the wisdom of the world, but rather by reading and applying God's Word. Psalm 1:1-3, <sup>1</sup> *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.* We all need God's guidance to lead us and His grace to sustain us to the triumphal day our ears will hear from the Master Himself, Well done, good and faithful servant!

## ***Servant Hearts Are Filled With Joy***

(Romans 15:13)

My wife and I were driving down the road when we heard a thud and a flapping noise. Almost immediately we realized a back tire had gone flat. We wondered what it was that caused the tire to go down so quickly. Neither one of us had seen anything unusual in the road. Upon investigation I saw a closed end piece of metal about half-inch in diameter. The object was sticking out about one-inch from the middle of the tread. When I pulled it out, I was surprised to see what had flattened my tire. It was an industrial tire gauge and six-inches of it was buried inside my tire.

The tire gauge was bigger and more solid than any tire gauge I had ever used before. Its purpose was the same as the smaller tire gauges I was used to using to check the air in my tires. I thought to myself, how ironic! The very tool designed to help me measure the air in my tire and make sure my tires were safe for the road was what actually what destroyed my tire.

As ironic as that scenario was, consider this one. It is incredibly ironic to realize most people are searching for joy, but few seem to find joy. It is especially ironic when we understand God wants to fill all of us full with the fruit of joy. Romans 15:13, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*



The fruit of the Spirit called “joy” is the second in the list of the fruit found in Galatians 5. The word “joy” surfaces in the New International Version 218 times. The word “joy” is found fifty-three times in the Psalms and fifty-eight times in the New Testament. The word “rejoice” is found 133 times. The word “rejoicing” is found twenty-four times. The Greek noun for “joy” is CHARA. The word for “rejoice” in the Greek is CHAIRO. The words joy or rejoicing are found upwards to 400 times in the Bible. To give us a bit of a comparison, in the same Bible translation containing the word joy, I found that the word “happiness” was only found six times.

We should make a distinction here between joy and happiness as we consider this fruit. Happiness is a feeling that is closely connected to our circumstances. If our present situation is good, we can be happy; otherwise there is no way we can be happy. Happiness is dependent on our external circumstances. Happiness is connected to the people, places, and things that are happening around us. If all is well around us, we can be happy. If the people, places, or things are not running smoothly, happiness will completely elude us.

Joy, on the other hand, is a more lasting eternal quality. Joy derives from a deeper place in our hearts than the surface feeling of happiness. Happiness frequently comes and goes with our circumstances while joy is still possible when the tire goes flat. I was not happy that my tire went flat in the darkness of the night, but I did not lose my joy. One may think, “OK, but that was just a flat tire.” Let me share an experience that changed the course of my life.

At the age of twenty-four I was diagnosed with Berylliosis. I was not happy about that, but at the time I did not even know what it meant to have Berylliosis. The more I learned, the more unhappy I became. I only knew I had been extremely sick for some time. I remember the weeks leading up to the barrage of tests, the lung biopsy, and the clinical diagnosis. The first visible sign of something really being seriously wrong was when I first coughed up blood. My wife and I were walking along together when I suddenly had a coughing attack.

I saw a medical doctor who immediately got on the phone with a pulmonary specialist and scheduled me an appointment. As I waited my turn to see the specialist, I had time to think about the recent weeks of sluggishness leading up to bringing up the blood. I had been in great physical condition as a former long-distance runner. It had not been that many years since I logged sixty-miles a week one summer in an advanced running schedule. As I thought about my physical problems leading up to seeing the lung specialist, I felt like I had aged at least 50 years over the course of a few nights. I found myself having difficulty getting the air I needed in my lungs.

We have such a tendency to take for granted the precious gift of air until suddenly, we find ourselves with a breathing problem. God supplies us air to sustain us or none of us could live on this earth. Again, isn't it ironic that God gives us the air we need and so many people do not even thank Him for this wonderful gift of physical life.

I remember my wife, sitting by my hospital bed after many days of testing and the doctor communicating the diagnosis.

He explained I had Berylliosis. I had never heard this disease and I had a lot of questions for him. I was familiar with the metal called beryllium. I was working as a certified dental technician and beryllium was a small percentage of several different alloys in the nonprecious metal we used in our substructures for crowns. I learned from the doctor there is a certain airborne gas that comes off beryllium when a person is grinding it. While most people have a high resistance to it and, though I had consistently worn a mask to protect myself, my resistance to these airborne gases had broken down.

The doctor said several things that shocked me. He explained that I may never be able to run like I had in the past. He indicated I might not be able to play sports or do certain outdoor activities. He said these things because I had acquired some permanent scarring on my lungs which would affect my future activities.

The real clincher came when the doctor said, "You can never go back and work in a dental laboratory where beryllium is being used anywhere in the lab." Wow! At the time, I knew that this directive would limit my job prospects in a big way. The news was a lot to take in for a young man who was on path to own his own dental laboratory. I had been purchasing equipment and storing the items away until the time was right to start my own dental lab. I was shocked and taken back by the news to say the least. There were so many unknowns and my future uncertain.

There were three things I was sure of in my confusion. First, I knew God loved me and would be by my side no matter

what would happen in the future. I had been a Christian for only a year, but I had in my heart an immeasurable amount of joy and appreciation for God's forgiveness of my sins. God was the Rescuer and I was the rescued and that news embedded a joy that is not found anywhere else in this world, but in Jesus.

I was confident in the midst of all the confusion that was circling through my thoughts that God had a plan and I was in it. I had no doubt God would guide me through all the confusion and help me make sense out of the unknown I was facing. If I did not experientially know it earlier, I definitely realized it that day in the hospital. I had a joy in my heart that was not of this world.

The joy the world knows is equated to the word happiness. Happiness is shallow and temporary, but real abiding and lasting joy comes from the Spirit and rests deep in the heart. I learned not to focus on the "how" of my journey, but on the Lord who I was following and desirous to serve. Satan tries to rob believers of their joy when we encounter trouble of any kind. How reassuring it is to know our faith in God can sustain our joy. Jude 1:24, *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.*

The second thing I knew for sure the day I was diagnosed by the doctors was special as well. I knew my wife loved the Lord and me and would be by my side no matter how things would unfold. I could not work or do much of anything for a while, and I found an extra amount of time on my hands. I took the time as an opportunity to read the Bible like never

before. As I read it, my trust in God taking care of me grew stronger as did my prayer life.

Some months later a Christian brother directed me to a Bible school where I could take in-depth Bible correspondence courses which could help me share my faith and God's love with others. Within a year I was able to return to work in a dental laboratory that did not use beryllium. Over the course of the next few years, my earliest goal of owning my own dental laboratory shifted and I began cutting back on my dental lab hours to intern under the guidance of a personal worker at church. A couple of years after that I wanted to attend ministry school as a fulltime resident, and my wife was willing to support me through the Bible school.

The third thing I knew for sure the day the doctor was laying out more than my mind could absorb also brought comfort to me. I knew for sure I had been given a special promise as a Christian. The Apostle Paul said in Romans, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28). Verse 28 is a familiar verse to followers of Christ. This verse has brought great comfort to Christians for generations as they have struggled with the fact that life has its share of bad things that can happen and bring heartache.

We should realize that Romans 8:28 is not telling us, "The bad things that happen to us are really good things." That is not the point at all behind this verse. What is the primary point of v.28? God works. God works for us. God is on our side and He works on our behalf. He invites us to participate

in His divine nature as He works all things for the good of those who love Him. The Greek word “work” here is the same word we get our English word “energy.” It means God is working through the good, the bad and the ugly, for our ultimate and eternal good.

Whatever our problems are, I hope we realize that in the midst of our problems that God does not have any problems. God does not have problems, only plans. When that concept sinks in, it becomes easier to trust God. When we place our trust in a God who does not have problems, only plans, we can have a measure of joy while we are dealing with our problems. I need to remember God is never surprised by something that happens. God never says, “Man, I didn’t see that one coming!” God never lays awake at night wondering what He is going to do. God has plans and He works His plan for our eternal benefit as we follow Jesus.

God at work does not mean He will take away every thorn we deal with in the flesh or problem we face. But what a joy it is to know God cares and He provides us grace and strength to stay on heaven’s path. When the apostle prayed for his bothersome thorn to be removed, God did what was best for Paul in His eternal view. To Paul’s credit and benefit, he trusted God to have his best interest in mind. God told him,<sup>9</sup> *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*<sup>10</sup> *That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

The real issue in our lives is not finding a spouse, or getting a job, or even finding the right doctor, as important as those things can be – the real issue in our lives comes down to trusting God. It is the trust and confidence we have in God working that can fill our hearts with joy. The book of Acts ends with Jesus being taken up into heaven in the presence of those whom He had chosen to be apostles. Luke 24:52 reads, *Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* They were made aware that the crucifixion did not have the final word. They had evidence that God was at work. They knew they were in God's plan and this knowledge infused joy in their hearts. Of course, they still had some confusion about what would happen in the days ahead, but they would press on to serve their Lord with joy.

Peter later would speak of the joy we can have in our heart. 1 Peter 1:8-9, <sup>8</sup> *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,* <sup>9</sup> *for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.* The New King James Version, The New American Standard Bible, The English Standard Version, as well as the New International Version all use the word “inexpressible” in v.8 as to the joy Peter speaks about. Peter is overwhelmed with joy. He is wrestling for the words to describe his deep reflective fruit of the Spirit of joy that saturates his heart. Peter's joy is not based on any physical thing or circumstance, but rather on the spiritual blessings from God's hand.

The idea behind this “*inexpressible and glorious joy*” is the kind of joy the Philippian jailer had when he and his household believed in God in Acts the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter. Acts 16:30-34, <sup>29</sup> *The*

*jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup> At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. <sup>34</sup> The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family.*

Notice the Bible says, “*he was filled with joy.*” Why wouldn’t he be filled with joy, for he had just had his sins forgiven and became a member of God’s forever household. We should keep in mind the context from which the story of the jailer unfolds. He was not the man behind the steel bars, he was watching the prisoners. He was in charge of making sure the prisoners stayed behind bars until further notice.

Acts 16 reminds us that we all face trials. The question that we have to face is, “How will we handle the trials when they confront us?” Jesus said, *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world* (John 16:33b). Life can put a squeeze on us and as Christians what do we do when life puts a squeeze on us? Are problems and trials a reason to lose our joy?

Absolutely not! Paul and Silas were trying to plant a church in the city of Philippi and they met some ladies who were receptive to message of Jesus. Things were going externally well for a short while, but soon the circumstances became extremely difficult.



There are trials there are hardships and difficulties over which we have no control in life. The Apostle Paul had more than his share of trials during his missionary journeys. Paul and Silas had now become the recipients of false accusations in the Roman Colony of Philippi. The men were beaten and thrown in jail in the city. Acts 16:22-24, <sup>22</sup> *The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten.* <sup>23</sup> *After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.* <sup>24</sup> *Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.* The jailer knew his job was to keep the trouble makers in jail and not to let them escape.

When the pressures started squeezing down on these servants of God, they found two things to be of great help. These are two things we can do in the midst of our pressures of life. We can pray and offer up praise to God. Prayer is something we are prone to do when we get in a tight spot, but praise is another matter altogether, although praise should be coupled with our prayer when we reflect on what God has done for us. Psalm 126:3, *The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.*

We must not underestimate the value of prayer and praise and how they can help us face our trials in a way that will be pleasing to God. What do these men of God do after being beaten and placed in the innermost secure part of the jail? Acts 16:25 tells us, *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.* Prayer and praise lift us from the

muck and mire of our doubts, and encourages us all the more to trust in God to work all things to our eternal good.

God works; we can be sure of this. While we are not privy to all the things God is doing for our eternal good, we are left to believe that He is at work for us. In Acts 16 we can see a picture of God at work because there is no other explanation for what happens. Acts 16:26-30 reads, <sup>26</sup> *Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.* <sup>27</sup> *The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.* <sup>28</sup> *But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"* <sup>29</sup> *The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.* <sup>30</sup> *He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

When we read about the foundations of the prison shaking and the cell doors flying open, we understand this not an ordinary earthquake. We can know for sure when we learn that even the prisoners' chains came loose so there can be no doubt that God was at work! The jailer assumed at this point the prisoners have all escaped and he drew his sword because under Roman Law if the prisoners escaped, the jailer would be tortured and killed.

In an act of mercy, the jailer was going to take his own life and Paul saw what was about to happen. Paul shouted, *"Don't harm yourself! We are all here."* That is an amazing statement. The jailer was the one who had secured them to

the inner cell and had their feet fastened in stocks. It would have been tempting for another prisoner to take the silent approach in such a situation. But it was not tempting for a servant of God who was on mission to share salvation's joy with others. Paul and Silas loved Jesus and they knew the Lord wanted the jailer to be saved from his sins.

What was the result of the joy the jailer heard that night from these men of God and the words he heard from Paul? Acts 16:30b, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* The jailer listened to the Word of the Lord and responded by faith, and he was cleaning the wounds on these men. We learn the jailer Acts 16:34, *...was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God.* It is evident that Paul and Silas, and now the jailer, knew the joy Jesus desires us to experience.

Jesus told His disciples in the Gospel of John; *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete* (John 15:11). Jesus having spoken of the value of obedience in the previous verse went on to stress the importance of His disciples loving one another. He then did something special. He called them friends. Why did He call them His friends? Because they were willing to serve Him. We know they served the Lord with joy and this made them successful servants. More than that, it made them Jesus' friends. Jesus said, <sup>15</sup> *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.* <sup>16</sup> *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last* (John 15:15-16a).

As Jesus was preparing to return to the Father, He prayed for His disciples. His request for the Father was for these disciples to be filled with the fruit of joy. John 17:13, *I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.* The women who followed Jesus knew this joy. Two women went to the tomb on the first day of the week after the resurrection and saw the stone on Jesus' tomb had been rolled away from the entrance. That is when they heard some beautiful words from the angel.

Matthew 28:5b-8, <sup>5</sup> *The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.'* Now I have told you." <sup>8</sup> *So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*

When a person becomes a Christian joy, the fruit of the Spirit, naturally begins to fill our hearts. Christians walk or live by the Spirit which allows them to mature in the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:25, *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.* As we walk by the Spirit's teaching, we set our sights on serving the Lord and one day entering heaven. Jesus told His disciples to "...rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

If the news of being in glory land with the Lord one day does not bring an immeasurable amount of joy into our hearts, we should check our spiritual pulse. We should notice that

many people are on the quest for joy in their life, but the evidence is clear by the results we see. They are looking for joy in all the wrong places. Most of us have made the search ourselves with the same result until finally we were introduced to the One who wants to fill our hearts with joy.

We will never find the eternal in the things of this world. Joy does not develop from the accumulation of material things, or from things running smoothly and our tires never going flat. May we join the spirit of the first-century Christian servants who tried to lovingly communicate where real joy is found. God uses people to encourage others to abide in Jesus and know the place where joy never fades. Paul reminds some who were already on the journey with Jesus of his personal efforts to try to help them know full measure of joy. Philippians 1:25-26, <sup>25</sup> *Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,* <sup>26</sup> *so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.*

Joy is initiated from a relationship with the Lord which should develop into a spirit of servanthood that serves others with the joy of Jesus in our hearts. The fruit of the Spirit called joy derives itself from a relationship with God. In my previous book called *Journey into a Joy-Filled Life*, I pointed out that joy is a choice, but the choice begins with choosing Jesus. Choose Jesus, and we choose the joy only He can deliver in this joyless world. Our lives are being guided by something, but only the lives being directed by Jesus into right thinking and right living will result in those hearts being filled with joy.

## CHAPTER 2 – QUESTIONS TO PERCEIVE, PONDER, AND PRACTICE

1. What is the difference between the idea of happiness and the idea of joy the Bible says we can experience as a Christian?
2. When we are facing unknowns as a result of trials and are confused about the situation, what are some things we can know with absolute certainty? How does this knowledge help us to face future days with a level of joy in our hearts?
3. What is the real issue we face when it comes to our trials? How does this keep us from losing our joy?
4. Explain what you believe is the primary point of Romans 8:28? How can this truth comfort us?
5. How can we know that the earthquake that shook the Philippian jail was no normal kind of earthquake. What does this tell us?
6. Why was the Philippian jailer filled with joy? What act of service did he minister to Paul and Silas?
7. Jesus told His disciples the main reason they should rejoice in Luke 10. What did He say?
8. We should join the first-century Christian servants in what mission?