

Monday, September 22, 2025 @ 7:00 pm  
Zoom ID: 898 1686 2091 Passcode: 165904

## Bible Study: The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength

Main Text: Nehemiah 8:10

### 1. Opening (5 minutes)

- Begin with prayer, asking God to open hearts to receive His Word.
- Icebreaker: Ask each woman to share one thing that brings her joy (big or small).

### 2. Background & Context (10 minutes)

- Author/Book:
- The book of Nehemiah is traditionally attributed to Nehemiah, though compiled with Ezra.
- Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes who returned to rebuild Jerusalem's walls after the exile.
- Historical Setting:
- The people had returned from Babylonian exile, faced discouragement, and were spiritually broken.
- In Nehemiah 8, Ezra reads the Law publicly. The people wept in conviction, but Nehemiah reminded them not to mourn—God's joy would sustain them.
- Key Point:
- Strength does not come from our emotions or circumstances but from God's joy and presence.

### 3. Scripture Exploration (10 minutes)

Read and reflect on these passages:

- Nehemiah 8:10 – “Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”
- Psalm 28:7 – “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.”
- John 15:11 – Jesus: “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”
- Philippians 4:4 – “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”
- Habakkuk 3:17–18 – Even in loss, “yet I will rejoice in the Lord.”

Teaching Point: God's joy is not circumstantial—it is rooted in His character and promises.

### 4. Application for Women Today (10 minutes)

- Many women carry heavy loads (family, work, health, community).
- Culture tells us strength comes from independence, busyness, or appearance.
- Scripture reminds us true strength comes when we root ourselves in God's joy: His presence, His Word, and His promises.

Reflection: Joy is not the absence of struggles, but the assurance of God's presence in the midst of them.

### 5. Discussion Questions (10 minutes)

1. What does “the joy of the Lord” mean to you personally?
2. How do you normally try to find strength when you feel weak or overwhelmed?
3. What are some practical ways we can tap into God's joy daily?
4. How can we remind each other, as women, to rest in God's joy instead of carrying everything ourselves?
5. What's one area of your life right now where you need to lean on God's joy for strength?

### 6. Closing (Prayer & Commitment) (5 minutes)

- Invite each woman to silently identify one area where she needs God's joy.
- Pray corporately: Ask God to replace heaviness with His joy and renew strength for each woman.

- Optional: Close with a worship song about joy/strength (“The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength” chorus, or similar).

▮ Takeaway: Joy is not optional—it is a spiritual weapon. When we walk in the joy of the Lord, we find strength to face life’s battles with hope and victory.

## 📖 Background of the Book of Nehemiah

- Time Period:
  - Around 445–420 B.C., after the Babylonian exile. The Jewish people had been in captivity for 70 years (as prophesied by Jeremiah), and many had returned under leaders like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and later Nehemiah.
  - The Persian Empire was in control at this time. King Artaxerxes was ruler when Nehemiah served as his cupbearer.
- Author:
  - Nehemiah is considered the primary author, though Jewish tradition often links it with Ezra as one historical account.
  - Nehemiah wrote largely in a first-person, memoir style, giving personal prayers and records of his leadership.
- Purpose of the Book:
  - To record the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls.
  - To highlight the spiritual renewal of the people through God’s Word.
  - To show how God restores His people physically, emotionally, and spiritually after devastation.

## 🌍 Culture of That Day

- Political Climate:
  - The Jews were under Persian rule—allowed to return home, but still not a fully independent nation.
  - They faced external opposition from surrounding enemies (Samaritans, Ammonites, and others who didn’t want Jerusalem rebuilt).
- Social & Religious Climate:
  - Many Jews were discouraged, poor, and vulnerable. Their city was still in ruins, and they felt disgraced among the nations.
  - Intermarriage with surrounding pagan cultures threatened their identity.
  - The Law of Moses had been neglected; many had forgotten God’s commands.
  - Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah worked together—Ezra focusing on teaching God’s Word, and Nehemiah on rebuilding and reform.
- Spiritual Struggle:
  - The people longed for restoration and identity after years of exile.
  - They wept when the Law was read aloud (Nehemiah 8), realizing how far they had drifted.
  - Nehemiah’s reminder—“the joy of the Lord is your strength”—was a call not to stay in guilt but to embrace God’s grace and celebrate His faithfulness.

## ▮ Key Takeaway for Women Today

Just like the women, men, and children of Nehemiah’s day, we too live in a time where:

- Society often pulls us away from God’s truth.
- Women are balancing multiple roles, sometimes feeling discouraged or “in ruins” spiritually or emotionally.
- Yet God is still faithful to rebuild what is broken. His joy gives us strength for the rebuilding process—whether that’s our families, marriages, health, faith, or communities.