



THE JOY OF THE
LORD IS YOUR
STRENGTH

Nehemiah 8:10

May the Lord use these pages to strengthen your faith, sharpen your discernment, and draw you closer to Him.

The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength



Scripture

“Then he said to them, ‘Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’”

Nehemiah 8:10

In this passage, Nehemiah is speaking to the people of Israel after they returned from exile. They are gathered and Ezra has just read the Book of the Law of Moses. Many of the people haven't heard it for a long time or have never heard it. As Ezra reads, the people weep.

Read the broader passage, Nehemiah 8:9-12

“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 as 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 to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’ So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, ‘Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.’ And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.”

Also read Ezra 6:19-22 for a similar account of the Passover festival.

We can point to numerous passages where we are told that the Lord is our strength. Cross reference Isaiah 12:1-2

“You will say in that day; I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song and has become my salvation.”

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What it Means

The people are weeping. They understood the weight of the Law being read and how far from the Law they had strayed. Their grief was appropriate, but in that moment, Nehemiah tells them...enough weeping. Eat, drink, share your bounty. This day is about God. God is with them and has restored them. And, that is reason to be joyful.

There is nothing that shadows the presence of God and the joy that it brings. The joy of the Lord is a source of strength that we can draw from. It is more than a feeling. It replaces grief and sorrow.

WORD STUDY

The Hebrew word for “grieved” is **atsab** (aw-tsab’). It means to hurt, to be in pain, to be sorry. The people are weeping because they are deeply hurting as they listen to the Law being read.

The Hebrew word for “joy” in this passage is **chedvah** (khed-vaw’). It means gladness or rejoicing. This word for ‘joy’ is only used in one other verse. 1 Chronicles 16:27 describes the glory and honor of being in God’s presence. That is this kind of joy.

The Hebrew word for “strength” is **ma’oz** (maw-oze’) and it means fort, rock, stronghold, or fortress. It is from the Hebrew word **azaz** (aw-zaz’) meaning to harden or to ‘be stout’. This is a serious place of protection.

Nehemiah is telling the people that the joy that can only come from the Lord is strong enough to protect you. It is your fortress when you are hurt.

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Discern the Truth

You know you’ve messed up. You’re mad at yourself. You’re sad about the situation. You feel the guilt. Maybe you’ve hurt someone around you or maybe you just know that you’ve sinned against God. You may be told you should feel guilty.

Often people judge Christians more harshly for their past failures and want to define us by our failures since we are supposed to be “good.” But we know...we *are* sinners. We also know that we have an awesome God who has given us a way to move beyond a failure. We feel the pain of failure differently than other people.

Conviction is more than feeling guilty. Conviction is the awareness of the truth — the truth about sin and the truth about God’s will. When you know you’ve used your free will against the will of God — that feeling isn’t just guilty. That feeling is conviction.

Conviction is the Holy Spirit moving in you to make things right. It is here where you can repent, let go of the guilt, and move forward leaning on the truth of God and the joy and strength that can only come from Him.

Feeling convicted isn’t where you need to sit and wallow — it is where you look in the mirror, acknowledge your sinfulness, repent, and then let go of the grief... “for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Let the joy of the Lord be your fortress.

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Observe & Apply

Nehemiah spoke to a gathering of people who had just been convicted by God’s word. Have you experienced true conviction — a time when you weren’t just sorry that you did something wrong, but a time when the Holy Spirit took over and your only way forward was through the Lord?

- When you know you’ve acted against God’s will, what is your usual response? Do you tend to get stuck in guilt and shame, or do you move forward with repentance and joy in the Lord?
- Have you ever felt like you didn’t deserve to be happy, to rejoice? What pulled you out of that moment? Would that moment have looked differently if you immediately turned to God?
- What would change in your daily life if you truly believed that God is your strength — a real source of protection and power? How could you change the lives of others if they could see that in you?

When the joy of the Lord becomes our fortress rather than leaning on our own strength, we stop trying to hold it all together and instead allow ourselves to be held by God. That is when we are truly living **Safe in Christ**.



I launched EnsnaredLife.com with a desire to curate honest, truth-telling content alongside simple, purposeful things that strengthen a woman’s walk with Christ or just add a little sunshine into the day. I am not a theologian or a professional blogger. I just wanted to learn something new while seeking wisdom and discernment every single day.

I value any time when I can sit alone, or in a small group, and study God’s word, but I really wanted something that I could truly grab onto — something deeper than a quick devotional, more meaningful than what’s usually on the shelf, yet still doable in the middle of real life. Most of all, I wanted it to be honest, without watering down or ignoring hard truths.

After much prayer about where to take this project, these **Daily Moments of Discernment** are the result. I pray that these short, standalone moments point you straight back to Scripture and help you live **Safe in Christ** — free from the snares that easily entangle us (Proverbs 29:25).

Thank you for supporting this project and thank God for the inspiration to create it.

Unless otherwise noted:

- All scripture citations are taken from the 2001 ESV translation.
- Word studies and cross-references are from the Crossway ESV Study Bible, the Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, or the e-Sword Bible app.
- Interpretations are my own, guided first by prayer and then by the many reference books and Bible translations on my shelf and, when helpful, an internet search to check a fact.

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