

## 118. GRATITUDE LEADS TO JOY - WEDNESDAY - MAY 6, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Wednesday!

This morning when I took my dog out, I inspected our new tomato plant, and it's already doubled in size! I can also see the start of some flowers. Those flowers are what'll eventually turn into tomatoes.

Did you know that *\*all\** fruit comes from a flower? It's true! The flowers come first and then the fruit develops out of the flower.

This week, we kicked off a new series on the Fruit of the Spirit, which is the good stuff God wants to grow in our lives. And we started yesterday with love.

Love is not only first, but it's first for a reason. It's the most important one, and it's the one that makes all of the others possible! Love is kind of like the flower that blooms first and then gives rise to all of the other good fruit.

And the second on our list and our focus for today? Joy! What do you think of when you hear the word joy? Do any feelings or experiences come to mind? Why don't you take a moment and share these with your family? If you need more time, you can pause the podcast, and I'll be right here when you get back.

[PAUSE]

When I think of joy, I think of things like making my kids

laugh, or seeing my dog run free at the dog park, or the feeling I get when my favorite team wins a big game.

Those are definitely things that can inspire joy. And I'll bet you named things like that. But did you know that joy is about more than just being happy?

You can actually be full of joy, even when things \*aren't\* going the way we want them to. And that's because the kind of joy that God wants to grow in our life isn't based on what's happening at the moment. It's based on our relationship with God.

Let's see if I can give you an example. Hmm... Oh, ok! Here's one. When I look out the window right now, it's all gray and cloudy. We had one day of sun yesterday, which was awesome, but now it's back to being overcast.

Now, what if I told you that I thought today was a beautiful day? If you're just looking out the window, you might disagree.

You might say, "What?! It's not beautiful! Yesterday was beautiful. Today, it's all gray and yucky outside."

You're not wrong, but you're also only looking at one thing.

Maybe I think it's beautiful because I got a great night's sleep, and I feel rested and ready to tackle the day. Or maybe it's a beautiful day because I'm filled with gratitude for my family and my friends. Or maybe it's a

beautiful day simply because I am alive on this earth, and I know God loves me!

If you're having a tough day, and you're not feeling joy, that's ok. It's pretty normal, actually. It's really easy to focus on what's happening to us or around us.

But here's the amazing thing about joy. The kind of joy that God grows in our life grows deeper. We can shift our focus and end up tapping into that joy no matter what's going on.

One of our core disciplines on the podcast is gratitude, and practicing gratitude is a great way to harvest the fruit of joy. What you do is you look around and try to see the good. See where God is present and active.

You can look around and see things like your house or your apartment, your school, or the people or pets that fill your life.

You can look around for the tiny things that inspire wonder and gratitude, like a cool breeze on a hot day, a favorite snack after school or work, or the feeling of putting on clean clothes after a bath or shower.

You can also look *\*inside\** for things to be grateful for, like your heartbeat, the breath in your lungs, or a talent or skill you have.

Or you can just be super general like my daughter who likes to pray, "Thank you for the world and everything you

made.”

The more we look for the good stuff that God has placed all around us, the easier it’s going to be to hold onto joy even when other things aren’t going so well. It reminds us that, no matter what’s going on, God’s love for us is strong and isn’t going anywhere.

Oh, and one last thing. One of the small things that brings me joy as I make this podcast is picking the background music for each episode. During the break, I made you a playlist of the songs I’ve used, and you can find it on Spotify by searching “Family Prayer Podcast Soundtrack.”

Ok, let’s close in prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands. But with a topic like joy, it’s also a great day for a wiggle prayer.

Dear God, we thank you that, no matter what’s going on, you love us. And because you love us, you’re also surrounding us and filling us with things that can give us joy. Help us to not simply focus on the challenges in life but to keep our eyes open to see the good. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, have a joyful Wednesday, and I’ll talk to you tomorrow.

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