

lookin' up,

Daily Devotions Sharing
Joy and Faith

by Ralph Supper

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Introduction

I've lived through seasons when joy bubbled out of me like a fountain — where God's presence felt so close I could practically trip over it.

I was *living joy*.

I've also lived through seasons where joy felt like a faraway radio station, fuzzy and out of reach no matter how hard I adjusted the dial. I read the books, prayed the prayers, did all the things...and still—

I thought.

I'd never.

feel joy.

again.

The world won't deliver joy to your doorstep like a free Amazon Prime package. You won't just wake up one day brimming with it. Not after the morning headlines. Not at work. Not just by going through the motions.

Joy has to be chosen. Embraced. And Felt.

In John 15:11, Jesus says, "As you remain in my love... my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete."

That means joy isn't something you earn. It's something you *receive*. When we root ourselves in God's love — no matter the season — we find joy waiting right where it's always been.

Faith has taught me this: even in empty seasons, joy isn't gone. It's like a favorite hat sitting on the shelf, waiting for you to pick it up and wear it. Joy doesn't depend on your circumstances; it flows from God's unconditional, never-ending love.

These devotions are meant to help you re-center on that love — anywhere, anytime — so that joy can grow in you, even on the hardest days.

May this book bring you joy and faith daily. And may you always keep...

*lookin' up,
Ralph*

Jan 1: New Creation

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Reflection:

New Year's resolutions are like gym memberships in January: great ideas, but we often forget about them by February. Thankfully, God's version of a fresh start doesn't depend on our ability to follow through. When He says the "new is here," it's not because of our self-discipline, but because He's the one doing the makeover!

Reflection Question:

What's one "old" thing in your life that you're ready to let go of this year?

Jan 2: Anxiety Dump

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." — 1 Peter 5:7

Reflection:

Have you ever tried giving someone a heavy bag and saying, "Here, you carry this"? Now imagine doing that with your anxiety, except you're giving it to God. The best part is, He won't complain or ask for a break. He's not going to say, "Can we share this load?" Nope, God is the ultimate weightlifter, and He's ready to take on your worries—no strings attached.

Reflection Question:

What's something that's been weighing on your mind lately that you need to hand over to God?

Jan 3: Let's Lol

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." – Proverbs 17:22

Reflection:

Ever had one of those days where you laugh so hard you snort? That's the kind of medicine this verse is talking about. Laughter can do more for your mood than any "self-care Sunday" ever could. On the flip side, stress and negativity can drain you faster than your phone's battery when you forget to charge it. So, which one sounds more fun?

Reflection Question:

What's something that makes you laugh out loud and brings joy to your heart?

Jan 4: Worthless Worry

"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." — Matthew 6:34

Reflection:

Worrying about tomorrow is like packing three suitcases for an overnight trip—you're carrying way too much. Jesus is basically saying, "Relax, I've got this. Don't overpack your worries for things that haven't even happened yet." Today has its own shenanigans for you to handle, so why pile on tomorrow's?

Reflection Question:

What are you overthinking about the future that you need to trust God with today?

Jan 5: Trusting Plans

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

Reflection:

You ever try to assemble something from IKEA without reading the instructions? Sometimes life feels like that—random pieces everywhere and no clue how they fit. Good news: God's got the instruction manual! Even when you feel like you've got extra parts, He's working on a master plan that's way better than any flat-pack furniture could ever be.

Reflection Question:

When was a time you trusted God's plan and saw things work out better than you expected?

Jan 6: More Strength

"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength." — Philippians 4:13

Reflection:

You know that one friend who insists they can carry all the grocery bags in one trip? Well, this verse is like God saying, "Don't worry, I've got you covered." We're not meant to go it alone or pretend we're superhuman. It's okay to admit we need help—especially when the One offering strength is the ultimate multitasker.

Reflection Question:

Where in your life do you need to lean more on God's strength instead of your own?

Jan 7: What's Missing?

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." — Psalm 23:1

Reflection:

Ever notice how sheep don't really stress about where their next meal is coming from? They trust the shepherd to lead them. It's like God's telling us to chill out a bit and trust that He knows what He's doing. If the sheep aren't panicking, why are we? The Lord is your shepherd, so put down the to-do list and trust His timing.

Reflection Question:

What's something you're stressing about that you need to trust God to provide?

Jan 8: Helpful Guidance

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." — Psalm 119:105

Reflection:

Ever tried walking through your house in the dark, only to step on a rogue LEGO? Yeah, it's painful. That's what life can feel like without God's guidance—just stepping on a bunch of emotional LEGOs. But His Word lights up the path, making it a little less hazardous and a lot more peaceful. It's like turning on a flashlight before things get messy.

Reflection Question:

Where in your life do you need God's guidance to avoid unnecessary "painful" steps?

Jan 9: Missing Piece

"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

Reflection:

Life is like a giant puzzle, and sometimes it feels like we're stuck with a bunch of mismatched pieces. But while we're busy trying to make sense of it all, God's got the box lid with the picture. He's working all those pieces—yes, even the ones that seem random—into something good. So don't give up just because it looks messy right now.

Reflection Question:

What "puzzle piece" in your life feels out of place, and how can you trust God to work it for good?

Jan 10: Sharing Fruits

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." — Galatians 5:22-23

Reflection:

Ever walked into a kitchen and smelled fresh fruit? It's refreshing and makes you want to grab a bite. That's what the fruit of the Spirit should be like in our lives—so good that people can't help but notice. But let's be honest, sometimes we're more like a half-rotten banana than a juicy mango. Thankfully, God's always ready to help us freshen up!

Reflection Question:

Which of the fruits of the Spirit are you proudly sharing lately?

Jan 11: House Cleaning

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10

Reflection:

Ever tried cleaning a messy room by just shoving everything in the closet? It might look tidy for a bit, but eventually, the mess spills out. That's why David asks for a pure heart, not just a tidy appearance. God's not into the "shove it in the closet" method. He's about real transformation from the inside out. So, let's stop hiding the mess and let Him clean it up.

Reflection Question:

What "closet" in your life needs God's deep cleaning and renewal?

Jan 12: Being Still

"Be still, and know that I am God." — Psalm 46:10

Reflection:

In a world where even microwaving leftovers feels like it takes too long, "being still" sounds almost impossible. But God's not asking for us to master the art of doing nothing—He's asking us to stop running around trying to be in control and just acknowledge that He's got it covered. Sometimes, the most powerful thing you can do is nothing...and let God do everything.

Reflection Question:

What area of your life do you need to stop trying to control and allow God to take over?

Jan 13: Seeking Your Top Priority

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." — Matthew 6:33

Reflection:

It's like when you're looking for your keys, but you find everything else except the keys. Then, when you stop frantically searching, you realize they were in your pocket the whole time. Life's the same way. We chase all these things, but when we stop and focus on God, it turns out He's got what we need right there, waiting for us. It's like divine "pocket keys."

Reflection Question:

What's something you've been chasing after that you need to let go of to seek God first?

Jan 14: Love, love, love

"Do everything in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14

Reflection:

"Everything" covers a lot, doesn't it? Even that email you're writing in ALL CAPS because someone annoyed you. God's command to do everything in love means from the big gestures to the small, even when it's hard. Love is the filter we're meant to use—so before you press send, speak, or act, check: Is this running through the love filter, or am I about to clog someone's inbox with attitude?

Reflection Question:

What's one daily action you can take to be more intentional about showing love?

Jan 15: Dumping Burdens

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." — Matthew 11:28

Reflection:

You know how you feel after you've carried heavy grocery bags up three flights of stairs? That's how life feels sometimes—like one never-ending trip from the car to the kitchen. Jesus' offer to give us rest is like someone showing up at the door and saying, "Hey, I've got this." And He doesn't just mean physical rest—He's talking about the soul-deep, "I can breathe again" kind of rest.

Reflection Question:

What burdens are you carrying that you need to hand over to Jesus for some much-needed rest?

Jan 16: Joyful Companions

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." — Matthew 18:20

Reflection:

You ever notice how when you're with a couple of good friends, even a bad situation feels better? Now imagine that, but add Jesus to the mix. That's what this verse is all about. It's like the ultimate invitation to hang out, knowing that when we come together with Him in mind, He's right there, making every moment richer.

Reflection Question:

Who are the people in your life that you can gather with to invite Jesus into your conversations?

Jan 17: Replacing Fear

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?" — Psalm 27:1

Reflection:

Ever tried walking through a haunted house in the dark? Every little noise makes you jump. But when someone turns on the light, the "scary stuff" doesn't seem so intimidating. Life can feel like that haunted house sometimes—full of fears and unknowns. But when God flips the light switch, suddenly, those shadows aren't as scary anymore.

Reflection Question:

What fears are you facing that you need to bring into the light of God's presence?

Jan 18: Shining Light

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." — Matthew 5:16

Reflection:

You don't need to be a lighthouse to make a difference—sometimes a simple flashlight is all it takes. The point is, let your light shine. People don't need you to be perfect, but they do need to see God's goodness in you. So, whether you feel like a floodlight or just a candle, keep shining. God knows how to make your light count.

Reflection Question:

How can you shine with good deeds today?

Jan 19: Trust what's Trustworthy

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." — Proverbs 3:5

Reflection:

Imagine trying to assemble furniture without the instructions—yeah, it probably won't turn out right. That's kind of what leaning on our own understanding is like. We think we know best, but God's got the actual instruction manual for our lives. Trusting Him means following His directions, even when the pieces don't seem to fit.

Reflection Question:

Where are you trying to "figure things out" on your own that you need to trust God with instead?

Jan 20: Finding Strength

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me." — Psalm 28:7

Reflection:

Think of God as your personal bodyguard. He's there to protect you from the things you can't see coming and to give you the strength to face the things you can. With Him, you're not walking into life's battles unarmed. So next time you feel like the world's throwing punches, remember who's got your back.

Reflection Question:

What's one area in your life where you need to rely more on God's protection and strength?

Jan 21: Don't Give Up

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." —

Galatians 6:9

Reflection:

Doing good can sometimes feel like watering a plant that refuses to grow. You keep showing up, doing the right thing, but it feels like nothing is happening. This verse reminds us that good things take time. Don't give up just because you haven't seen the results yet—God's got a harvest in store, but sometimes He's waiting for just the right season.

Reflection Question:

What's one area where you're tempted to give up on doing good, and how can you keep going?

Jan 22: Trusting When You Can't See

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." – 2 Corinthians 5:7

Reflection:

Walking by faith is like hiking through fog—sometimes you can't see more than a few steps ahead. But God's asking you to trust Him, even when you can't see the whole path. It's less about having all the answers and more about trusting that He's leading you the right way, fog and all. Just take the next step, and He'll show you the rest in time.

Reflection Question:

What's one situation in your life where you need to trust God for the next step, even though you can't see the whole path?

Jan 23: They Won't Win

*"No weapon formed against you shall prosper." —
Isaiah 54:17*

Reflection:

Just because something's "formed" doesn't mean it's going to succeed. Think of this verse like a spiritual force field—stuff might get thrown at you, but it won't take you down. God's got the final say, and He's not about to let anything that's formed against you have the last word.

Reflection Question:

What challenges are you facing that you need to trust God won't prosper against you?

Jan 24: Rejoice, Even When Its Hard

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Reflection:

Rejoicing always and giving thanks in all circumstances sounds nice...until you're stuck in traffic or dealing with a difficult coworker. But this verse isn't saying to pretend everything is perfect—it's about choosing joy and gratitude, even when things are messy. It's like finding the silver lining in life's daily annoyances, and believe me, that can take some practice!

Reflection Question:

What's one small thing you can rejoice and give thanks for today, even if the circumstances aren't ideal?

Jan 25: Forgive Because You Are Forgiven

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." — Ephesians 4:32

Reflection:

Forgiveness is like taking out the trash—you don't really want to do it, but leaving it around stinks up the whole place. This verse reminds us that just as God took out our trash (so to speak), we should be willing to do the same for others. Holding onto grudges doesn't help anyone; it just adds to the mess. Time to take out the emotional garbage!

Reflection Question:

Is there someone you need to forgive today, even if it's hard?

Jan 26: Calming Worry

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." — Philippians 4:6

Reflection:

Anxiety is like a hamster wheel—it keeps you running in circles but gets you nowhere. Instead of spinning your wheels, God invites you to hand it all over to Him. Prayer is the way off that hamster wheel. And when you give thanks in the process, it's like taking a deep breath and realizing you're not alone in this.

Reflection Question:

What's one worry you need to turn into a prayer today?

Jan 27: Powerful Peace

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

And be thankful." — Colossians 3:15

Reflection:

Letting the peace of Christ "rule" in your heart sounds nice, but it's kind of like letting someone else drive your car—it requires trust. We often want to take the wheel and control everything, but God's peace doesn't work that way. He's asking you to trust Him to drive, while you sit back and enjoy the ride. Bonus: no road rage when He's in charge!

Reflection Question:

What's one area of your life where you need to let Christ's peace take the wheel?

Jan 28: Overcoming the Seemingly Impossible

*"For nothing will be impossible with God." – Luke
1:37 (NIV)*

Reflection:

Sometimes life feels like you're trying to juggle while riding a unicycle on a tightrope (a little impossible). But God reminds us that He's the God of the impossible. What seems like an unmanageable mess to us is a simple fix for Him. So next time you feel like you're about to fall off that tightrope, remember God's got the safety net in place.

Reflection Question:

What's one "impossible" thing in your life right now that you need to trust God with?

Jan 29: Pure In Heart

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

— *Matthew 5:8*

Reflection:

Think of your heart like a window—when it's dirty, it's hard to see what's on the other side. But when it's clean, everything becomes clear. Jesus is saying that a pure heart lets us see God more clearly, not because we've earned it, but because we've let Him do the cleaning. Time to grab the spiritual Windex!

Reflection Question:

What's clouding your heart today, and how can you let God purify it so you can see Him more clearly?

Jan 30: Be Confident That You Have Help

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." — Hebrews 4:16

Reflection:

Approaching God's throne with confidence is like walking into a bakery knowing you can have as many donuts as you want. You don't have to worry about being turned away—grace is on the menu, and it's unlimited. So, stop tiptoeing around like you're interrupting God's afternoon nap. He's wide awake and ready to serve you grace with a side of mercy.

Reflection Question:

Where in your life do you need to boldly approach God for help, instead of hesitating?

Jan 31: Giving Up On Fear

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." — 2

Timothy 1:7

Reflection:

Fear is like a bad internet connection—it slows you down and makes everything harder. But God's Wi-Fi signal is full strength, and it's powered by love, courage, and a sound mind. So the next time fear tries to buffer your life, just remember: God's got the ultimate "no fear" upgrade plan.

Reflection Question:

What's one area where fear has been holding you back that you can surrender to God's power?

Feb 1: Finding Safety

"The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." — Proverbs 18:10

Reflection:

Ever play tag as a kid and have a "safe base"? That one spot where no one could tag you? The name of the Lord is like that, but way better. It's your eternal safe zone, where you're untouchable from whatever life throws at you. So when things get crazy, remember—you've got the best "home base" ever, and no one can tag you out.

Reflection Question:

Where do you need to run to God's "fortified tower" for safety and peace in your life?

Feb 2: What's Important

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8

Reflection:

Ever tried to follow a really complicated recipe, only to realize halfway through that you don't have half the ingredients? God's recipe for life isn't like that. It's simple: act justly, love mercy, walk humbly. No exotic spices required. Just follow these three steps, and you're cooking with divine wisdom.

Reflection Question:

Which of these three (justice, mercy, humility) do you need to add more of in your daily life?

Feb 3: True Protection

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge." — Psalm 91:4

Reflection:

Picture God like a giant bird, tucking you under His wing for protection. It might sound a little odd, but it's comforting when you think about it. He's like a protective mama bird, and no storm or predator is getting through those feathers. So when life's thunderstorms hit, just know you're covered—literally.

Reflection Question:

When have you felt God's protective "wings" over your life, and how can you trust Him more in tough times?

Feb 4: Renewing Your Strength

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." — Isaiah 40:31

Reflection:

You know when you're running on empty and desperately need a nap, but life just keeps going? God's not handing out free naps (sorry), but He does promise renewed strength. So instead of dragging your feet like a tired toddler, you can soar like an eagle—because who doesn't want to upgrade from a slow crawl to flying?

Reflection Question:

What area of your life needs an "eagle's wings" boost of renewed strength?

Feb 5: True Friends

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity." — Proverbs 17:17

Reflection:

A real friend is like the person who doesn't judge you for wearing pajamas to the store—they love you in all your moments, even the awkward ones. True friends stick around in the tough times, not just when things are fun and easy. So if you've got friends like that, you're richer than you think.

Reflection Question:

Who's been a true friend to you in difficult times, and how can you be that kind of friend to someone else?

Feb 6: Finding Refuge

"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him." — Nahum 1:7

Reflection:

Ever had one of those days where you just want to crawl into a blanket fort and hide from the world? Well, God is basically the ultimate blanket fort—strong, safe, and always there when life gets rough. And the best part? No one can break in and ruin your peace. So next time trouble comes knocking, you know where to hide.

Reflection Question:

What's a "trouble" you need to take refuge from in God's care today?

Feb 7: Actually Doing the Work

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." — James 1:22

Reflection:

Listening to God's Word without doing anything about it is like watching a workout video from the couch. You might feel inspired, but unless you get up and start moving, nothing changes. God's asking for more than just your ears—He wants action. So, time to get off the spiritual couch and put His words into practice.

Reflection Question:

What's one thing God's Word has been telling you to do that you need to start acting on?

Feb 8: Loved First

"We love because He first loved us." — 1 John 4:19

Reflection:

Ever play the game where you try to figure out who said "I love you" first? Well, God definitely beat you to it. His love came first, no matter how hard you try to outdo Him. So if you're ever wondering if you're loved, just remember—you're part of the ultimate "first love" story.

Reflection Question:

How can you reflect God's first love to someone else today?

Feb 9: Unshakable Strength

*"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge." — Psalm
18:2*

Reflection:

Imagine God as the ultimate rock—more solid than any boulder you could hide behind. When life feels like it's crumbling, He's the unshakable foundation you can count on. And unlike that one wobbly chair in your house, God's rock-solid support won't ever let you fall. So take a deep breath, and lean on the Rock that never rolls.

Reflection Question:

Where in your life do you need to take refuge in God's unshakable strength?

Thanks for sharing your joy and faith with me!

I'm available for speaking engagements, podcasts, coffee talks, janky DIY home improvement projects and writing opportunities to inspire your audience.

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