INTRODUCTION

Has anything made you sad recently? When sad things happen, you might find yourself thinking only about your problems instead of about Who God is and what He has done for His children. God gives believers abundant mercy and hope and an everlasting inheritance! Keep these things in mind and allow God to work through trials to refine your faith. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:7–8).
Enthusiasm Overview

What is Enthusiasm?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what enthusiasm means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of enthusiasm is “expressing with my soul the joy of my spirit.” Our soul is that part of us by which we relate to the physical world, and our spirit is that part of us by which we relate to the Lord. The word enthusiasm comes from two Greek words: en, which means “in,” and theos, which means “God.” When you are “in God,” such as praying, obeying His voice, and reading and meditating on His Word, then you are able to experience genuine joy. “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11b). When your spirit is in close fellowship with God, your joy will be obvious to those around you. This expression with your soul is enthusiasm.

God’s Word gives many examples of enthusiasm. King David and the congregation greatly rejoiced when they gave willingly for the building of the Temple. (See I Chronicles 29:9.) Families joined in the celebration when the wall around Jerusalem was completed. (See Nehemiah 12:27, 40–43.) The Jews had “light, gladness, joy, and honor” because God had worked on their behalf to save them from Haman. (See Esther 8:11, 15–16.) Such excitement was the result of people knowing the Lord and seeing Him work.

The opposite of enthusiasm is apathy. Apathy means that instead of being eager and interested, you are indifferent and unconcerned. Apathetic people ignore the needs of those around them. They do not want to participate in the family’s ministry to the nursing home. They roll their eyes and shrug their shoulders when a job is assigned to them. They are not moved by the missionaries’ reports at church. They are easily bored. If you find yourself feeling apathetic about things that matter to the Lord, ask Him to show you what has come between you and Him. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit” (Psalm 51:10–12).

Christians in close fellowship with God cannot help but express the joy of their spirits. They love to spend time in God’s Word and are eager to talk about what He is teaching them. Enthusiastic Christians recognize God’s work in and around them. Their excitement bubbles over through energetic conversations, facial expressions, and voice inflections. Their decisions and actions inspire others to Godliness. They enjoy fellowship with God throughout the day and are often seen smiling and singing of God’s goodness. Nothing can replace this genuine, spontaneous, exuberant result of abiding in Christ.

When the life of Christ in us bursts forth like a refreshing fountain, we are enthusiastic. “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36:9).
Enthusiasm in Scripture

Read aloud and discuss each verse, question, and concept.

Proverbs 2:1–6 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” What a privilege to study the rich truths of God’s Word, hide them in your heart, and apply them to daily life! These truths are priceless treasures, far above the value and beauty of rubies and diamonds. As you dig deeper into God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will be a radiant expression of His love. He will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

We see examples of enthusiasm in God’s character in the following ways:

• God’s name, Emmanuel, means “God with us.” His presence with us is the source of joy. (See Matthew 1:22–23, Psalm 16:11.)
• God rejoices in keeping His covenant with Israel. (See Jeremiah 32:38–42.)
• God Himself is our strength. (See Isaiah 26:4.)
• God rejoices over us with singing. (See Zephaniah 3:17.)
• Jesus enthusiastically proclaimed salvation to those who would listen. (See John 7:37–38.)
• Before meeting the demands of the day, Jesus spent time alone in fellowship with His Father. (See Mark 1:35.)
• Jesus rejoiced as He saw His Father’s truth revealed to those who would receive it. (See Luke 10:21.)

• The Holy Spirit produces the joy in our lives that results in enthusiasm. (See Galatians 5:22–23.)

ENTHUSIASM IN MY LIFE

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out enthusiasm daily.

• What have I seen the Lord do that causes me to be glad? (See Psalm 126:3.)
• What task is before me that I can pour my energy into completing? (See Ecclesiastes 9:10a.)
• Am I fervent in my love for God or apathetic about growing spiritually? (See Mark 12:30.)
• What am I enthusiastic about? Do I rejoice when I see others believe in Christ? (See Luke 15:7.)
• Do I eagerly do my work or put it off for another time? (See Romans 12:11.)
• Do I carry out my tasks only because I must, or do I complete my assignments as unto the Lord? (See Colossians 3:23–24.)
• How can my enthusiasm encourage people in their walk with the Lord and their ministry to others? (See Hebrews 10:23–25.)
• Can I find joy in the Lord’s chastening in my life, knowing that my repentance will result in greater fellowship with Him? (See Revelation 3:19–20.)

ENTHUSIASM KEY VERSE

“Rejoice evermore. . . . Quench not the Spirit.”
I Thessalonians 5:16, 19
The two travelers began their seven-mile walk from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. Their hearts were heavy, as the One Who they thought was the Messiah had just been crucified in Jerusalem during the Passover! All hope was gone. Had they misunderstood the prophecies about Messiah in the Holy Scriptures? As the two continued their discussion, a stranger quietly fell into step with them. He asked what they were discussing and why they were sad. Surprised, they asked Him if He was not aware of what had just happened in Jerusalem. Furthermore, it was now the third day after the death of Jesus of Nazareth, and His body was gone from the sepulcher! Women had been to the grave and said angels had met them, saying He was alive. But the women didn’t see Jesus. The Stranger then spoke, and His words began to lift their spirits. Their hearts were greatly encouraged! What did the unknown Person share with these downcast travelers? When this Stranger joined them for a meal at the end of their trip, something miraculous occurred. What overcame the discouragement of the two travelers and filled them with enthusiasm? Read today’s Bible story and see if your heart is also encouraged by this “Stranger.”

BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS
Read Luke 24:13–35 together and discuss the following questions:

1. Did the two travelers from Jerusalem realize Who had joined them on their way to Emmaus? (See Luke 24:15–16.)
   Do you recognize the presence of the Lord throughout the day?

2. Were the travelers enthusiastic or troubled as they walked and talked? Did Jesus notice? (See Luke 24:17.)
   Would you describe yourself as enthusiastic or discouraged right now? Do you think others notice?

3. In what way did Jesus encourage the troubled travelers? (See Luke 24:27.)
   When was a time that you were able to encourage someone by sharing Scripture with him?

4. When they arrived at Emmaus, what did the travelers do that indicated they had enjoyed their journey with Jesus? (See Luke 24:28–29.)
   Have you ever had a time when you enjoyed being in prayer and in the Word with Jesus and did not want it to come to an end?

5. What happened when the travelers recognized Who their Guest was? (See Luke 24:31.)
   When discouraged, have you asked Jesus to open your eyes so that you can know Him more fully?

6. How did the travelers describe the excitement that replaced their sadness as Jesus spoke with them on the road? (See Luke 24:32.)
   How would you describe the joy of your spirit when God speaks to you through His Word?

7. What did the enthusiasm of the travelers cause them to do late into the evening? (See Luke 24:33.)
   When was a time your heart was overwhelmed and God helped you overcome discouragement? (See Psalm 61:2.)

8. When the travelers returned to Jerusalem, what did the they eagerly tell the other disciples and those who were with them? (See Luke 24:34–35.)
   Are you eager to share what God is teaching you from His Word? With whom could you share?
Memory Verse
I THESSALONIANS 5:16, 19

Play the game together to help the children commit I Thessalonians 5:16, 19 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“Rejoice evermore. . . .
Quench not the Spirit.”

I THESSALONIANS 5:16, 19

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Knock, Knock, You’re It!
Select one child to sit facing a wall and with his back toward the others who are seated in a semicircle around him. Have the other children slowly read the verse aloud together. As each word of the verse is said, starting with the child on the left, have each child take turns raising and lowering his hand. While the children are reciting the verse, the one with his back to the others chooses when to knock on the wall. When he knocks, whoever was raising his hand at that moment switches places with the “knocker.” Continue until everyone has the verse memorized or each person has had a chance to be the knocker.

DOERS OF THE WORD
In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “rejoice even when things don’t go my way,” “think on what is true,” or “obey You.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ______________
________________________________________
________________________________________.
I ask that You would develop enthusiasm in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
INTRODUCTION

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the enthusiasm key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.

I Thessalonians 5:16, 19

“Rejoice evermore. . . . Quench not the Spirit.”

Enthusiasm

Expressing with my soul the joy of my spirit

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “the” and “joy.” Younger children could point to the ABC’s. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words instead of only the underlined words.
Craft
SMILE-ON-A-STICK

INTRODUCTION

During this character quality study we are asking the Lord to develop enthusiasm in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! Today we are making smile-on-a-stick crafts with popcorn as a reminder that what is inside “pops” out, and, as you rejoice in the Lord, you will have an enthusiastic smile to share with others!

Supplies:
- Cardstock or construction paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Popcorn and a way to pop it
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Scotch tape

Instructions

Begin to pop popcorn.

Do you hear the popcorn bursting? What is inside the kernel is popping to the outside. Enthusiasm is like the popcorn kernel when it is heated. When joy is in your spirit, the joy is so great that it cannot be contained. Instead, it bursts forth, and your soul may express such joy in a song, a celebration, or a big smile! Your decisions, actions, and attitudes “pop” with energy, zeal, and excitement because you are greatly enjoying fellowship with the Lord! In some ways a Christian’s face can be likened to a billboard, proclaiming to the world the joy of knowing Christ, Who is loving and good. A glum Christian might communicate to the world that God is not enough and does not sufficiently meet his needs. Which message is true? Which message is your face proclaiming? Remember that when you are in fellowship with God and rejoicing in Him, your face will bear a smile, not a frown, and reveal the joy in your spirit! Like those energized corn kernels, enthusiasm will burst forth!

When the popping is done, hand each child construction paper and a marker. Instruct them to draw a smile on their paper. The smile should be about four inches long. Have each child cut out the drawn smile. (Older children may want to write on the back of their smiles two or three attributes of God or other reasons they can rejoice in Him.) Tape the smile to a popsicle stick. Once that is done, let the children enjoy eating popcorn while they glue the popped kernels onto their smiles.
"...And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).
The moon shone through the curtains in the New York home. The moonlight revealed the middle-aged lady’s face, grimacing from pain. Lydia Baxter was an invalid and had spent most of her married life confined to her bed. Carefully she moved her stiff muscles into a different position. Then, closing her eyes again, she whispered a name . . .

Many Christian workers gathered at the Baxter home because of the beloved woman’s cheerful personality. Despite her physical incapacity, Mrs. Baxter’s spirit was in fellowship with the Lord, and joy filled her heart. Preachers, evangelists, and Christian workers sought her out for comfort and encouragement. She would share with those who asked how she could be so joyful in the midst of physical pain—the secret was in the name she often whispered:

I have a very special armor. I have the name of Jesus. When the tempter tries to make me blue or despondent, I mention the name of Jesus, and he can’t get through to me anymore.

Mrs. Baxter was an eager student of the Bible and loved to discuss the meanings of Biblical names. Bible names such as “Sarah” (“princess”), “Samuel” (“asked of God”), and “Isaac” (“laughter”) are well-known examples. However, Mrs. Baxter’s favorite Biblical name was the one that meant “Savior”—Jesus! He was the joy of her spirit. His name was the one she would call on when her pain or circumstances would seem overwhelming. He was her Savior, indeed, and the joy of her spirit was seen by many in her enthusiasm.

Another way Mrs. Baxter shared her enthusiasm for Christ was in her writing, which includes several hymns. One hymn that is still familiar today is “Take the Name of Jesus With You,” which was written in 1870, just four years before her death. “Take the Name of Jesus With You” was widely used in the Moody-Sankey revival meetings in the late 1800s. In this particular hymn, Mrs. Baxter shares with the world the “secret armor” that strengthened her soul:

Take the Name of Jesus ever,
As a shield from every snare;
If temptations ‘round you gather,
Breathe that holy name in prayer.

The word enthusiasm comes from two Greek words, en, which means “in,” and theos, which means “God.” As we focus on being in God and knowing Him, we will have such joy in our spirits that our souls will overflow with enthusiasm. The next time you are not having such a good day, remember the hymn writer, Mrs. Baxter, and her secret armor. Let us take the name of Jesus and be filled with His joy!

Photo courtesy of www.hymntime.com/tch
Hymn Sheet Music

Take the Name of Jesus With You

Lydia Baxter (1809–1874)  William H. Doane (1832–1915)

1. Take the name of Jesus with you, Child of sorrow and of woe;
2. Take the name of Jesus ever, As a shield from every snare;
3. O the precious name of Jesus! How it thrills our souls with joy.
4. At the name of Jesus bowing, Falling prostrate at His feet,

It will joy and comfort give you Take it, then, wher’eer you go.
If temptations round you gather Breathe that holy name in prayer.
When His loving arms receive us And His songs our tongues employ!
King of kings in heav’n we’ll crown Him When our journey is complete.

Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n;
precious name, how sweet!

Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n.
precious name, how sweet!
Word Search Answer Key

W S T H E A M W B H N K P
K H P U X S B Q V A M I M
T I R I P S Y W A V T Y S
O R W X R E J O I C E S A
N U D P E I R J F T R D I
D P G K S C T O N Q H A S
O Z W I S L C Y M M C E U
G D W G I U D T Z R N T H
S N A I N O L A S S E H T
K V S E G S L N J C U V N
G P F X V P B O R P Q N E
N Z Q B F T A M Y V N R I
J K M W Z Y Y H N D E I U

Recommended Resources

- *2018 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar*
- *Hymns for the Family* CDs (“Take the Name of Jesus With You” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 3.)
- *The Power for True Success*
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- *Character Sketches*, Volumes 1–3
- *Achieving True Success*

To view these resources and many more, visit us at:

store.iblp.org

Hymn History Bibliography

