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**The JOY of the LORD is  
your strength**

Andrew Boltman

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*<sup>1</sup> And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. <sup>2</sup> So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly; both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

Understanding the New Testament

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*<sup>3</sup> And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. <sup>4</sup> And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose.*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

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*And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. <sup>5</sup> And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood.*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

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*<sup>6</sup> And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law,*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

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*while the people remained in their places. <sup>8</sup> They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. <sup>9</sup> 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."*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

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*For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. <sup>10</sup> 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 8:1-12

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*<sup>11</sup> So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." <sup>12</sup> 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.*

Nehemiah 8:1-12

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1. *The sound of the word*
2. *The sense of the word*
3. *The holiness of God*
4. *The joy of God*

*Understanding the New Testament*

1. *The sound of the word*
  - *All the people gathered*
    - *People of the book*
  - *Reading Bible = REVIVAL*
    - *Rebuilding the nation*
    - *Feasts*

*Understanding the New Testament*

1. *The sense of the word*
  - *Praise & worship*
  - *Levites assisted in translation and interpretation*
  - *Bridging a cultural gap*
    - *Ee-Taow!*

*Understanding the New Testament*

1. *The holiness of God*

- *Conviction of the Law*
- *What is the holiness of God?*

Understanding the New Testament

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*'Everything begins with God. We don't understand the full significance of anything until we understand its relation to God. He was the one and only fact a trillion centuries before the universe or man existed. He is absolutely unique because he alone is infinite, unchanging, eternal. He is infinitely more important than any man or woman. His value is supreme. He is in a class by himself. And he is more worthy, ten thousand times more worthy, than any other class of beings.*

John Piper, The holiness of God

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*When we say that God is holy we mean that, along with the immeasurableness of his greatness, **his character is unimpeachable**. He cannot be charged with any wrong. He has an infinite love for what is infinitely valuable and an infinite hate for what opposes the infinitely valuable. His delight in praiseworthy things is unbounded, and his abhorrence of what is blameworthy is perfect.'*

John Piper, The holiness of God

Understanding the New Testament

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*Give unto the LORD the glory due to  
His name;  
Worship the LORD in the **beauty of  
holiness.***

Psalm 29:2

Understanding the New Testament

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*'If we don't feel a sense of awe and fear  
and admiration for the infinite  
holiness of God which opposes evil  
with wrath and fury, then all of our  
other feelings and thoughts will be  
defective at best.'*

John Piper, The holiness of God

Understanding the New Testament

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*1. The joy of God*

- *Misunderstood scripture*
  - *Is God happy?*
- *Why is His joy our stronghold?*
- *Where does God derive his joy  
from?*

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*"It is good news that God is gloriously happy. No one would want to spend eternity with an unhappy God. If God is unhappy then the goal of the gospel is not a happy goal, and that means it would be no gospel at all. But, in fact, Jesus invites us to spend eternity with a happy God when he says, '**Enter into the joy of your master**' (Matthew 25:23). Jesus lived and died that his joy-God's joy might be in us and **our joy might be full** (John 15:11; 17:13). Therefore the gospel is 'the gospel of the glory of the happy God.'"*

John Piper, *The Pleasures of God*

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*'The LORD your God is in your midst, a **mighty one who will save**; he will **rejoice** over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will **exult** over you with loud singing.'*

Zephaniah 3:17

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*'Just so, I tell you, there will be **more joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.'*

Luke 15:7

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*In that hour Jesus **rejoiced** in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth..."*

Luke 10:21

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*'Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.'*

Hebrews 12:2

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*'Revive us again, O God! I know you will! Give us a fresh start! Then all your people will **taste your joy and gladness.**'*

Psalms 85:6

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