

# Deuteronomy 26:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

## Analysis

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**And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house**—the climax of the firstfruits ceremony (26:1-11), commanding joy as religious duty. The Hebrew *samachta* (סָמַחְתָּ) means to rejoice, be glad, celebrate. This wasn't mere emotion but covenantal celebration recognizing God as the source of **every good thing. Thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you**—joy was communal, including those without land inheritance (Levites) and outsiders (resident aliens).

This verse connects gratitude, generosity, and worship. After offering firstfruits acknowledging God's provision and rehearsing redemption history (26:5-10), the worshiper was commanded to rejoice with those who received tithes and offerings. True worship produces joy that overflows to others, especially the marginalized. Deuteronomy repeatedly links obedience with joy (12:7, 12, 18; 14:26; 16:11, 14-15), presenting covenant life as inherently celebratory, not burdensome legalism.

## Historical Context

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Given circa 1406 BC in anticipation of harvest festivals in the Promised Land. Israel's agricultural calendar structured around three major feasts (Unleavened Bread, Weeks, Tabernacles)—all requiring joyful celebration with offerings shared among family, Levites, poor, and strangers. This contrasted with pagan fertility

religions' anxious appeasement of capricious gods. Israel's worship celebrated a faithful covenant God whose blessings were reliable, producing security and joy rather than fear and manipulation.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. Why does God command joy rather than leaving it as spontaneous emotion? What does this reveal about worship?
2. How does including Levites and strangers in celebration demonstrate that biblical joy is inherently communal?
3. What practices help Christians cultivate commanded joy that transcends circumstances?

## Interlinear Text

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וּשְׂמֵחָתְךָ	בְּכֹל	הַטּוֹב	אֲשֶׁר	נָתַן	לְךָ	יְהוָה
H8056	H3605	in every good	H834	hath given	H0	thing which the LORD
		H2896		H5414		H3068

אֱלֹהֶיךָ	וּלְבֵיתְךָ	אַתָּה	וְהַלֵּלְךָ
thy God	unto thee and unto thine house	H859	thou and the Levite
H430	H1004		H3881

וְהַגֵּר	אֲשֶׁר	בְּקִרְבְּךָ
and the stranger	H834	that is among
H1616		H7130

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 16:11** (References God): And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

**Deuteronomy 12:7** (References God): And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

**Philippians 4:4** (References Lord): Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

**Isaiah 65:14** (Parallel theme): Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

**Deuteronomy 28:47** (References God): Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;