

Rejoice and Remember: The Two Most Repeated Commands in Scripture

We live in a generation marked by anxiety, discouragement, fear, distraction, and emotional exhaustion. Many of us know what it feels like to be overwhelmed by uncertainty, weighed down by disappointment, and struggling to find lasting peace or joy.

So where do we find lasting peace and joy?

For Christians, the immediate answer is Jesus—and that answer is deeply true. Yet many sincere believers who genuinely love Jesus still wrestle with anxiety, discouragement, fear, and inner unrest. The question is not simply whether we believe in Jesus, but how we continually anchor our hearts and minds in Him.

What does Scripture say? How do we continue anchoring ourselves in Jesus, hope, love, and joy?

Again and again, Scripture points us toward two foundational practices: rejoicing and remembering.

This is not a minor biblical theme. Rejoicing is the most repeated command in Scripture, appearing around 1,000 times in various forms, while remembering is the second most repeated command, appearing around 300 times. The repetition is not accidental. What God continually repeats reveals what He deeply desires His people to live by.

Scripture calls us to rejoice in God's goodness and remember His faithfulness first and foremost because these practices glorify God, and they also shape the heart and mind, anchoring us in His presence, character, and promises. These are not shallow emotional exercises or techniques for positive thinking, but formative spiritual practices that cultivate peace amid anxiety, hope amid suffering, and confidence amid uncertainty.

Through remembering, we rehearse the work of God throughout history and within our own lives. Through rejoicing, we respond with worship, gratitude, and trust. Together, these practices strengthen faith, renew perspective, and form us more deeply into people marked by hope, peace, and trust in God.

Remembering Shapes Trust

Biblical remembrance is far more than recalling facts from the past. In Scripture, remembering is active and formative. To remember is to bring the faithfulness of God into the present in such a way that it reshapes how we think, trust, and live.

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is repeatedly commanded to remember God's acts of deliverance and covenant faithfulness:

“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” — Deuteronomy 5:15

Israel was not merely called to remember historical events, but to continually rehearse the reality that God was faithful, present, and trustworthy. Remembrance anchored God's people in their identity and reminded them that the same God who delivered them in the past remained with them in the present.

This is a foundational biblical truth: what we continually remember will often shape what we ultimately trust and believe.

This is also why the opposite of remembering—forgetting—is portrayed as spiritually, emotionally, and mentally destructive (Deuteronomy 8:11–18). Forgetfulness often leads to fear, anxiety, discouragement, pride, self-reliance, and misplaced trust. In Scripture, forgetfulness is rarely passive; it often becomes the doorway to distorted thinking, misplaced trust, and spiritual drift.

If we are honest, many of us naturally drift toward fear rather than faith, toward despair rather than hope. We often remember wounds more easily than grace, fears more easily than promises, and disappointments more easily than God's faithfulness. Left unchecked, the mind gradually drifts toward anxiety and discouragement.

Because God knows this tendency within the human heart, Scripture continually calls us to intentionally rehearse His goodness and faithfulness. Remembrance reshapes perspective and redirects the heart back toward trust.

The Psalms repeatedly reveal remembrance as a pathway back to hope:

“I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.” — Psalm 77:11

When facing uncertainty, we may either rehearse fear or remember the ways God has faithfully provided, sustained, and guided us in previous seasons. Throughout Scripture, remembrance becomes a means of renewing trust, strengthening faith, and restoring courage.

Rejoicing Is Rooted in God, Not Circumstances

Biblical rejoicing is much deeper than temporary happiness or emotional optimism. Scripture never commands us to deny suffering or pretend life is easy. Rather, believers are called to rejoice even when circumstances are painful, uncertain, or difficult.

Paul writes:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” — Philippians 4:4

What makes this remarkable is that Paul writes these words while imprisoned. His circumstances had not improved. He was still suffering, still confined, and still facing uncertainty. Yet Paul could still rejoice because his joy was rooted in Christ rather than his circumstances.

This is one of the central truths of biblical joy: we do not need our circumstances to change before rejoicing becomes possible. Christians can rejoice even in hardship because God is still present, still faithful, and still at work even in suffering.

Romans 8:28 further strengthens this truth by reminding us that God is able to work all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. This means suffering, disappointment, pain, and hardship do not have the final word. If life is still painful and broken, then God is not finished yet. Even more glorious is that for those in Christ, all things are ultimately moving toward restoration, redemption, resurrection, and the reality that the best is yet to come.

Remembering Fuels Rejoicing

One of the clearest patterns throughout Scripture is that remembrance often leads to rejoicing. As God’s people remember who God is and what He has done throughout history, gratitude begins to grow and joy begins to rise. The more we remember God’s goodness, faithfulness, provision, and deliverance, the more praise naturally flows from the heart.

Psalms 126 captures this connection beautifully:

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.” — Psalm 126:1–2

Biblical remembrance is not merely a private spiritual exercise; it is deeply woven into the life and worship of God’s people. Israel’s worship and celebrations were rooted in remembrance. Passover reminded God’s people of deliverance from slavery. Memorial stones reminded future generations of God’s faithfulness. Songs and testimonies rehearsed the mighty works of God. Sabbath worship centered around remembering and rejoicing in God’s goodness, provision, and covenant faithfulness. Worship was not merely ritual; it was remembrance expressed through praise.

Christ as the Center of Christian Remembrance and Joy

Ultimately, biblical remembrance and rejoicing find their fullest meaning in Jesus Christ. During the Last Supper, Jesus instructed His disciples to remember Him through the breaking of bread

and sharing of the cup (Luke 22:19). Christian worship is therefore deeply shaped by remembrance—remembering Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and promised return.

At the center of Christian remembrance is not merely an event, but a living Savior. Christians remember that Christ entered suffering, conquered sin and death, and rose again victorious. Because Christ is risen, we can rejoice no matter what circumstances we face. Christian joy is not rooted in life becoming easy, but in the certainty that Christ is alive, present, faithful, and still at work.

This is also one reason why regularly partaking in Communion is not only biblical, but deeply formative for the believer. Every time we come to the Communion table, we are reminded of what Christ has already accomplished through the cross, what He is presently doing in and through His people, and what He will ultimately fulfill in the restoration of all things. Remembrance, therefore, becomes a pathway back to worship, gratitude, hope, and praise.

Conclusion

Rejoicing and remembering are not peripheral ideas in Scripture; they are among the central rhythms of biblical faith. Rejoicing is the most repeated command in Scripture, appearing around 1,000 times, while remembering appears around 300 times. God continually calls His people to rejoice in His goodness and remember His faithfulness because these practices shape the heart, renew the mind, and anchor believers in truth.

The battle for the human heart is often a battle of memory and worship. What we continually remember and rejoice in will ultimately shape the people we become.

In a world filled with anxiety, fear, discouragement, and distraction, Scripture continually calls us to remember God’s faithfulness and rejoice in His goodness. To remember God rightly is to recover hope. To rejoice in God rightly is to resist despair. And to continually rejoice and remember is to anchor the heart in the unchanging faithfulness of God.