



Take as much as you
need

MESSAGE
NEXT
STEPS

TAKE SOME JOY

JANUARY 23

We all want to be “happy,” but how can you be happy when so much keeps going wrong? Jesus gives us a promise, a right, as children of God to experience joy at all times. God’s joy transcends what others do or don’t do and transcends circumstances. Discover how to live with pure joy throughout this new year.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being never, 5 being everyday) how would you rate how much Joy you experience in your life right now? Why do you think that is? What do you think it would take to raise that number?
2. What stood out to you from the message?
3. Read **Read Philippians 4:4-9**.
 - a. Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):
 - Who is talking? What is the circumstance?
 - Any repeated phrases?
 - What surprised you?
 - What stood out to you?
 - b.) Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)
 - What questions do you have?
 - Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences - what are the main points?
 - What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
 - What do you learn about yourself or the world around you?
 - c.) Now make some applications (what’s my response)
 - How do you respond to what you are reading?
 - How could this apply to your life today?
 - What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
 - Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?
4. Read **John 15:3-5**. Jesus is saying that apart from Him you can’t bear any eternal fruit. We can’t try really hard and produce lasting joy, that is a fruit of connection with God. How do you stay connected with God? Do you mainly talk to God or do you make space to listen? How is that going?

5. Read **John 15:9-11**.
 - a. Describe a time recently where you sensed God asking you to do something (or not do something) and you obeyed.
 - b. How often do you tune your mind to dwell on thoughts from God's Spirit, and then act on what you sense God is saying? Why do you think you answer that way?
 - c. Does it surprise you that Jesus connects obeying God to overflowing JOY? Why or why not?
6. Read **John 15:11-12**. Jesus wants us to have full joy through staying humbly connected with Him. He then commands us in that joy to love others in the same way He loved us (his love gave up everything for us).
 - a. Where are you holding onto joy only being a reality IF someone else makes you happy or your circumstances change?
 - b. How could you apply the things you heard in the message to change your mind and approach?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Phillipians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

John 15:3-5 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:9-12 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Walk by the Spirit, connected to God's great love for you, talking over every thought, listening with a heart that's willing to obey out of love for God, even in a sacrificial way...and God's promise is Joy. Joy that no person or circumstance can take away. Joy that comes from God, because Joy is your birthright as a Child of God. Talk with God this week about how this is going in your life.

Which of these areas are your struggling with the most:

- a. Walking by the spirit
 - b. Connecting with God's great love for you
 - c. Talking over your thoughts with God
 - d. Listening to God with a willing heart
 - e. Obeying out of love for God
 - f. Sacrificially loving others
2. How can you take a step (with God's help) in 1 weak area you identified above? Who can come alongside you in this?