

## Review

-Joy is a response to the goodness of god and our eternal salvation

-Imagine "a holy optimism"

-One of the Greek words for joy in the New Testament is 'chara', and can be defined as calm delight or an inner gladness, because of grace

God gives us joy. Lies and idols rob us of joy.

So when we are lacking joy, then there is a good chance that we are looking for joy in the wrong places.

- We must ask: What do I hold higher than God?

The bible actually commands us many times to rejoice **always** (all throughout the old and new testament) - is it then sinful to be sad? No! (Reference the beatitudes in matthew 5)

- but how can we do this in hard times?

By choosing joy, and fixing our eyes on Him, surrendering to Him, and being filled with the Spirit.

Joy is a fruit of the spirit - from Galatians 5

Acts 13:52 "And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

We cannot have true joy apart from God - so we must surrender ourselves to God - being willing to hear what He has to say - as He draws these gospel disconnects to surface - and then even surrendering those areas to Him, offering ourselves as vessels to be filled - then we will be filled with joy.

"The key to the Christian's joy is its source, which is the Lord.

The heart of the New Testament concept is this: a person can have biblical joy even when he is mourning, suffering, or undergoing difficult circumstances. This is because the person's mourning is directed toward one concern, but in that same moment, he possesses a measure of joy." - R. C. Sproul (*The Key To The Christian's Joy*)

## Joyful Community Discussion/Application

- 1) Reflect on times when you do not have this joy (this may be sometimes, in specific situations, most of the time, or all the time). (Remember that grieving is not the same as lacking joy... for example - a loved one may pass away, who we know is in heaven with Jesus. We are grieving over the loss, but still have joy in the fact that we know they are safe).
- 2) Discuss possible gospel disconnects that could be causing this lack of joy (or possible idols).

God gives us joy, while lies and idols rob us of joy.

- 3) Choose joy, and fix our eyes on Him.  
Combat the lies with the truth - dwell with the Lord, since He is the only source of our joy.  
\*Do this utilizing Isaiah 12 (Read through Isaiah 12, underlining passages of truth that we can root our joy in - then meditate on these truths - pick small pieces that you can memorize and repeat them over and over in your mind - write them down over and over - give the Lord space to minister to you through this truth)
- 4) Share how the Lord gives you Joy (something taken from the worship experience above).

### Notes to help:

(although joy is not equated to "feeling" happy vs sad, this can be a good place to start when trying to identify our joy)

-what earthly things in this life make you feel happy?

-have there been any times where you struggled to understand how God could be good due to the circumstances you were in? If so... what was causing you to doubt?

-Now look for the gospel disconnect and the truth that was missing.

**Examples of idols:** power, approval, control, comfort, respect, success, security, etc

**Examples of lies:** you aren't good enough, you aren't loved, you need acceptance from others to be joyful, you need material things to be joyful, you need to be successful, etc.

\*Combat these with the gospel truth - God has made you righteous in His eyes, God's love for you is unconditional, material things come and go... but God is forever, etc.