

Virtue: Joy

The 30 Essentials bible study is meant to coincide with the Sunday sermon. Start each session with a review of the Pastor's sermon. Discuss the main points, take away, and scripture references. Then continue with the appropriate week's study below. The facilitator will decide the study agenda for the 4 or 5-week bible study.

MASTER KEYS

Key Verse: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11)

Key Question: What gives us true happiness and contentment in life?

Key Idea: Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my purpose in life.

VIDEO SEGMENT QUESTIONS

As you watch the video segment for this session, use the following outline to records some of the main points.

1. Key Question: What gives us true happiness and _____ in life?
2. Key Verse: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be _____." (John 15:11)
3. Key Idea: Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my _____ in life.
4. Key Application - Let your _____ help you.
5. Key Application - Saturate your _____ with God's teaching on joy.
6. Key Application) _____ and embrace God's intimate involvement and care in your life.

EVALUATE

As a group, discuss your thoughts and feelings about the following declarations. Which statements are easy to declare with certainty? Which are more challenging and why? Use a scale of 1-6 to rate how strongly you believe the statements below. (1 = no belief at all, 6 = complete confidence)

1. _____ I have inner contentment even when things go wrong.
2. _____ Circumstances do not dictate my mood.
3. _____ I am excited about the sense of purpose I have for my life.
4. _____ I can be content with the money and possessions I have now.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Discuss practical ways to find joy in the midst of troubling times.
2. Discuss biblical examples of joy that inspire you. (i.e. apostle Paul in prison)
3. Discuss eyewitness examples of joy displayed within your community that motivate you.
4. Pinpoint unhealthy yet common beliefs and practices that stand in the way of true joy and contentment.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

If we want to experience true joy, we must anchor our lives in the source of that joy—God himself. Saturating our minds in the key beliefs and practices of the Christian faith can help draw us closer to God. The closer we are to him, the more confidence we will have as we face each day. Like the Israelites did, we can celebrate even God's smallest blessings in our lives. Christ offers contentment and happiness not limited by circumstances. Because of God's integrity, faithfulness and promises, we can surmount any circumstance with both smiles on our faces and true joy in our hearts. As Christians, we share the knowledge of this virtue with those God places in our lives so that they too can experience the deep and never ending well of God's joy.

OUR MAP/BIBLE ENGAGEMENT

A person can have money, all the possessions they desire, health and even good looks, but if they don't have joy, life can be rather challenging. It is easier to find joy when things are going well. Yet some people struggle to experience this virtue even amidst life's most favorite situations. Here is some amazing news! Christ offers us joy, no matter our circumstances. True joy is rooted in the key believe that the one true God is a personal God who is involved in and cares about our daily lives. He loves us and is working out a good plan for us. When we confidently believe this in our hearts, we can rise above our circumstances and find joy in Christ alone. How can this be? Let's explore some of these biblical concepts in this study.

***Source of Joy**

God may shower us with blessings and circumstances that bring joy to our lives, but true joy is found not in those things themselves but in their source. Joy can be fueled and found in living out God's Word and trusting in the promises God makes to us in his Word. The psalmist declared this truth with great confidence in this song.

Read and reflect on Psalm 16:1-11 and John 15:1-11 and answer the following questions.

1. Based on the passages you read; what practical steps can you glean that will lead to greater joy in your life?
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2. Pinpoint unhealthy yet common beliefs and practices that stand in the way of the true joy and contentment.

3

. How does keeping God's commands produce joy in our lives?

***Joyful Celebrations**

1. Israel held annual festivals and traditions to celebrate God's blessings. How do Christians accomplish this today?

2. God's promises find their ultimate fulfillment in his Son Jesus. Read Luke 2:10. Why did his arrival into our world bring joy to everyone present?

***Joy Despite our Circumstances**

Read Philippians 2:14-18 & John 16:16-24

1. How can difficult circumstances actually produce joy? What role do our attitudes play in being able to experience joy?

2. Paul said he had learned how to content even when he had plenty. Why do you think is it sometimes difficult for people who have plenty to be content?

3. How often do you acknowledge God's goodness in your life? Identify one good thing God has given to you or done for you in the past week and take a moment to celebrate that with someone else.

CASE STUDY

Use the following case study as a model for a real-life situation where you might put this week's key idea into practice.

Haley joined your book club a few years back. As a group, you usually spend the first fifteen minutes checking in on each other—asking about work, family, health, and hobbies. The discussion is usually uneventful until it's Haley's turn to speak. Her life seems to be a chaotic rollercoaster ride. It's either the best week of her life and everything is going as planned, or it's a complete catastrophe. There is no in-between with her. Joy seems to elusively slip through her fingers. Even when things are going well, she seems to be anxious about the future.

As her mentor, she has given you permission to speak honestly when you see areas for improvement in her life.

Using the Key Applications from this session, what could you say or do to help Haley find joy?

TAKE ACTION

Memorizing scripture is a valuable discipline for all believers to exercise. Spend a few minutes each day committing the key verse to memory. Recite the key idea out loud. As you do, ask yourself, "Does my life reflect this statement?" Answer the following questions to help you apply this week's Key Idea to your own life.

1. How would this virtue of joy express itself in your life?

2. What visible attributes can be found in someone who manifests the virtue of joy?

3. What is impeding your ability to choose a lifestyle of joy? How can you overcome this obstacle?

4. What action step can you take this week to increase the presence of joy in your daily life?

5. How often do you joyfully acknowledge God's goodness in your life? Identify one good thing God has driven to you or done for you in the past week and take a moment to celebrate that with someone else.

DEVOTIONAL

(I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
JOHN 15:11)

Nana, do you smile all the time?” These were my granddaughter's words to my shocked ears.

“I do when you're with me.”

The truth is, finding joy in spite of my circumstances is one of my biggest struggles. If I'm not careful, even the smallest frustration can rob me of my joy. Apparently, my granddaughter has not yet seen this side of me.

Jesus told his disciples that there is a brand of joy that is complete joy—the kind he experienced even when he knew the cross was just around the corner. Now that's a circumstance I have never faced. This kind of joy is available to you and me as well, if we stay close to him.

My granddaughter isn't always with me, but Jesus is. If I stay close to him, I can experience joy in spite of any circumstance that comes my way.

Every time you choose to smile genuinely even though your circumstances are less than joyful, you give evidence that the same joy Jesus experienced in spite of the cross is in you.

PRAYER JOURNAL: You have been pointed to the truths of what it means to think, be and act like Jesus as it relates to Joy. But it's prayer that will empower you to become all that you were created to be. Whatever you would say or think in a conversation with the Lord at this time write it here.

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5
