

Discussion Questions

August 24, 2025

ANCHORED

Holding on to Faith, Hope and Peace amid the storms of life



Anchored: Where True Joy Is Found

Biblical joy is not a fickle feeling based on circumstances, but a foundational and pervasive well-being that comes from being securely connected to its source - Jesus Christ.

1. Joy as Our Default Setting

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together. *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

The sermon called joy our "default setting." Why do you think most of us find our default setting is something else (worry, frustration, negativity)?

Paul links rejoicing with praying and giving thanks. How does practicing gratitude and constant prayer help cultivate a joyful heart, even when you don't feel happy?

2. Joy in the Midst of Trials

Read James 1:2-4 together. *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

Be honest - what is your initial, gut reaction to the command to "consider it pure joy" when you face trials? Discuss the significance of Jesus' brother James saying this, who watched Jesus crucified.

James says the reason for joy isn't the trial itself, but what the trial produces (perseverance and maturity). Can anyone share an example from their life where a difficult season ultimately produced positive spiritual growth?

3. The Motivation for Jesus' Endurance

Read Hebrews 12:2 together. *"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

The sermon explained that the "joy set before" Jesus was the reality of redeeming us for an eternity with Him. How does knowing that you were the source of Jesus' joy change how you view your relationship with Him?

How can Jesus' example of focusing on a future joy help us endure our present hardships?

4. The Secret to Complete Joy

Read John 15:9-12 together. *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my 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."*

Jesus says the key to experiencing His complete joy is to (1) remain in His love and (2) love others as He has loved us. Why do you think joy diminishes when we are disconnected from God or not being loving to others?

The sermon used the illustration of looking for the lost AirPods. In what "wrong places" do you find yourself looking for joy?

Application

This week, let's commit to cultivating joy by focusing on the Inward, Outward, and Upward practices from the sermon.

Inward (Abiding): What is one practical change you can make this week to spend more intentional time "near the fire," soaking in God's presence? (e.g., 10 minutes of silence, listening to a worship song on your commute, etc.)

Outward (Loving Others): Who is one person God is putting on your heart to show His love to this week? What is a specific, practical action you can take to love them?

Upward (Gratitude): How can this group help each other practice gratitude? (e.g., a group text where you share one thing you're thankful for each day, starting your next meeting by sharing gratitudes, etc.)

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Dallas Willard

..a pervasive sense of well-being that is infused with hope because of the goodness of God.

Philippians 4:4–6 (NIV)

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.

For Paul...

Joy is to be Pervasive...

It is not based on Circumstances...

It is directly linked to the nearness of God's presence...

It is connected to Gratitude.

James 1:2...

Consider it PURE joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds...

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

For the joy set before him he endured the cross...

In the midst of the agony on the cross eternity with us, His children, is the source of Jesus' Joy.

John 15:9–11 (NIV)

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. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:12 (NIV)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Joy is not an escape from Sorrow or tragedy. Real Joy must be compatible with Pain, Loss & Hardship. True joy exists simultaneously with rejection, death, & turmoil. - **John Mark Comer**

C.S. Lewis - Mere Christianity...

If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are not a sort of prize which God could, if He chose, hand out to anyone. They are a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very center of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you: if you are not, you will remain dry.

Cultivate Greater Joy:

1. Abiding In Jesus & His Love

2. taking that Love of Jesus and practically loving others around us

3. Gratitude