



FRUIT(FULL)

Joy

#npfruitfull

Week 3

3 of 10

April 25, 2021

Bottom Line: Joy is knowing who God is and what He has done.

Icebreaker: What are one or two things that have brought you joy this week?

Key Verse: *“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”* Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

For most people, happiness is the #1 ambition. We work at it hard; in fact, many of us are faking happiness for appearances, and it gives us so much stress. But we live in a real world, and not every day is a #10. Disasters happen. The good news is that there is a difference between happiness and joy, and joy is what we need. Joy is not an emotion, it's a state of mind. If we pursue happiness, we will be let down consistently. We tend to believe that things like money, possessions, and success will bring us joy, but they disappoint. However, God's Word gives us a clear track for joy: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE. When we have the right perspective, we have joy in spite of our circumstances. When we have the wrong perspective, we are robbed of joy. When we create a narrative on our ground-level perspective, we can't see clearly in tough times. GOD'S PURPOSE. When we grasp that God has a magnificent purpose, we, like Jesus, can persevere because we have joy in the outcome. Joy comes from the decision to focus on the purpose. GOD'S PRESENCE. Consciously make God the most important thing in your life. Think about Him and what He has done for you, not what you have done.

The joy of the Lord SUSTAINS us. Unlike all other kinds of joy, the divine joy that we have in the Lord is not at all dependent on our circumstances. The joys of the world exist only while joyful circumstances prevail—when we win. The joy of the Lord STRENGTHENS us. The person who is filled with this joy is strong when the circumstances would dictate weakness. The joy of the Lord SETS US APART. Only the joy of Jesus is joy in spite of not because of circumstances. Joy is something so hard to explain to this world because it is dependent on GOD. It does not come from within us. We don't manufacture joy like we can with happiness. It goes deeper than emotion. Joy is contentment in spite of circumstances. Possessing joy is a choice. We choose whether to value God's perspective, purpose, presence, promises, and work in our lives. How can you make a practice of joy in your life? GRATITUDE—a continual expression of gratitude will grow your joy exponentially. GIVING—if you are living a life where you get more pleasure from getting than giving, your life will certainly lack joy. GOOD NEWS—accepting the good news that you were made for Jesus. Without Him, life will never be enough. There is no greater joy than Jesus, and you can have Him now.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What was the most significant part of Sunday's message to you?

How do you see people pursuing happiness?

America is the wealthiest nation on the planet, yet there is not a place with a higher prescription rate for antidepressants. "I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it is not the answer" (Jim Carrey). Reflect and discuss.

When we create a narrative based off of our own ground-level perspective, it can be difficult to see tough seasons as being God's love and care for you. Discuss your own struggles and growth in this area.

The difference between a mature person and an immature person is perspective. Agree/disagree? Discuss.

Jesus didn't find joy in the event—He had joy in God's purpose, the outcome. What can you do when the specific purpose is unclear?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

We can't choose our feelings, but we can choose our focus. How do you deliberately change your focus?

You can't choose joy. You can choose your priorities, and your priorities determine your joy. Explain your understanding of this and the practical outcomes in your life.

How does a person practically live in the presence of God?

I get joy when I think of what God has done for me, not what I have done for Him. How does this defeat legalism and bring freedom and joy? Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in all things" (Kay Warren).

If you are aware of who Kay is, you know this is a great testimony. Share and discuss how it encourages you.

NEXT STEPS

1. Meditate with God and see if your focus is off. Are you running on your feelings, or your focus and priorities?
2. What priorities need to change? What are you going to do to change them?
3. Determine how you will practice the presence of God in your daily life.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Joy is knowing who God is and what He has done.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: James 1:2-3

Tuesday: Romans 15:13

Wednesday: Romans 14:17

Thursday: Hebrews 12:2

Friday: Romans 4:7-8

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)