



JOY TO YOUR WORLD

Joy Is a Habit

#NPJOY

Week 2

2 of 3

December 18, 2016

Bottom Line: We have to be intentional about the discipline of joy. Joy is not something that just happens consistently or naturally.

Icebreaker: Can you remember a time when you didn't feel happy, but had to choose to be happy? What was going on at the time? Did choosing to be happy actually make you happy? Why or why not?

Key Verse: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* Philippians 4:4

Everyone knows what it is to be joyful. However, not all people are familiar with the discipline of joy. At first, saying something like the "discipline of joy" might sound odd to you. You might think to yourself, "Is joy something that you can choose?" Isn't joy really more circumstantial? While that may be true on one level, on another level you can also find, grab hold of, and actively choose joy. The discipline of joy means setting before us the reality that eventually defines all reality. Even Paul recognized that choosing joy would be counterintuitive for the people to whom he was writing. That may just be why he added the last part of this verse.

Think about it: Philippians 4:4b doesn't really communicate anything different than Philippians 4:4a. Paul recognized that active rejoicing was something that needed to be commanded and commended twice. Most people have either a disposition toward joy or toward being dour; in either case, we can still choose joy.

While the picture we have of Jesus may be of a serious but loving Savior, when we look to the gospels we see that He was joyful. Matthew said that He came eating and drinking (11:19). Apparently, Jesus did this so much that the Pharisees used it as ammunition against Him. Jesus did not come telling people everything they were doing wrong. He came with love and joy. He chose joy, even when it cost Him (Hebrews 12:2). If we are to model our faith after our Savior, we must be people who choose joy. Paul's words in Philippians 4 come to us from Jesus, and they are a command, not a suggestion. Choosing to follow Christ is choosing the joy Christ found in serving God.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on John's message, what stood out to you?

John said there are four ways to make joy a habit: Rejoice continually, relate intentionally, celebrate strategically, and think differently.

When do you find it difficult to embrace joy?

When do you need to be told to find joy more than once? What should it teach us if Scripture makes a repeated command, like it does in Philippians 4:4?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Are you more inclined to joy, or is joy harder to come by for you? What are the downsides and upsides to each? Why are both valuable, and why is joy necessary to both personality types?

How can you make joy a routine habit in your life? Why is it important to make space for this?

When we pursue something we enjoy – such as hiking, baking, painting, spending time with a friend, reading a book, or enjoying a show on Netflix with your spouse – how are these avenues for joy right and good even if they aren't what we consider "spiritual pursuits"?

Why is the gospel reason enough for us to have and maintain joy?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Around Thanksgiving, we tend to pause and think about those people and circumstances that bring us gratitude, but what about that which brings us joy? Take a few moments as a group and share what you take joy in. Author C.S. Lewis believed that our joy was made complete when it was shared with other people. Do that in your group this week.
2. Praise Jesus for choosing joy; for setting joy before Him. Thank Him for leading you into His paths of righteousness, where you can find full and complete joy that is lasting and will not fade. Pray that you will find joy in serving the Lord this week.

EVALUATION/ACTION Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: We have to be intentional about the discipline of joy.

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:

Day 1: Hebrews 12:1-2

Day 2: John 15:9-11

Day 3: 1 John 1:1-4

Day 4: Psalm 16:11

Day 5: 2 Samuel 6:14-15

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)