



JOY TO YOUR WORLD

Joy Is a Gift

#NPJOY

Week 3

3 of 3

December 24, 2016

Bottom Line: Joy is a gift.

Icebreaker: What brings you joy in life? Why is joy something we celebrate?

Key Verse: *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."* Luke 2:10-11

In the countryside near Bethlehem, shepherds worked. Their primary responsibility was to guard the sheep, which were used for temple sacrifices among other things. How appropriate that the first people to hear about Jesus' birth were those who guarded the sacrifices He would later replace, when His crucifixion and resurrection permanently atoned for sins.

Socially, shepherds weren't Bethlehem's most popular men. Shepherding was a dirty job, usually preformed by the lower class. Because of their work, they were considered unclean and weren't allowed to worship in the temple. By letting the shepherds know about the good news of Jesus' birth and sending them to meet Him, God made it clear that no one was outside His love. That is why this news was truly "great joy" for "all people"!

The angel heralded the Savior. In that culture, people usually thought of "saviors" as those who claimed to heal or to rescue from danger. Jesus would infuse the title with a much deeper meaning. This is how Jesus brings us joy – His love and mission are not limited. He is committed to bringing joy to all people of the world. God wants people to find joy in Him and worship Him forever. The shepherds were among the first to receive this news, and they went and told others, which is what we are called to do as well.

Joy is a gift that is meant to be shared with all people.

THINK IT OVER >>>

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

Dwight said the good news of great joy is knowing God, being understood, being loved unconditionally, being forgiven, and being confident.

What gives you joy, specifically within your relationship with Jesus?

Why is joy something we should never run out of as believers?

Why is joy meant to be shared, as the shepherds demonstrated?

LOOK IT OVER >>>

When did you first find joy in Christ? How has your concept of Christian joy changed since then? How has it expanded?

The holidays, Christmas particularly, can be a trying time for many people. It may be hard for those you know to find joy this week. How can you help them?

On the other hand, there may be those who are unusually joyful at this time of year; that's a good thing. How can we keep joy running throughout the New Year?

When you think about all of the Christmas story and the work that God has done to redeem you, which aspect gives you the greatest sense of joy?

NEXT STEPS

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

1. At Thanksgiving we go around and share things we are thankful for. Take this time to go around and share something that gives you joy.
2. Praise God for the joy that He has sent to us in Christ. Thank Him that the most unlikely and undeserving of people receive His good news and can be changed by His Spirit. Ask that the joy you feel right now will not be left at this one place in time, but will be carried throughout the rest of the year.

EVALUATION/ACTION Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Joy is a gift.

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 4:15-16

Day 2: Romans 5:8

Day 3: Colossians 1:13-14

Day 4: Philippians 4:13

Day 5: Isaiah 49:15-16

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)