

THE JOY SERIES

The Joy Series
What is joy?
Philippians 4:4–9

We all want joy! But sometimes, for whatever reason, joy can be hard to come by. Whether you find yourself regularly inclined to anxiety, sadness, or depression or you're in a dark season currently, joy can feel elusive. It's even more difficult when the Bible talks so much about joy. How can Christians lack joy?! We're supposed to be the most joyful people on planet earth! The reality is life can be hard and joy can be hard to find. But joy is real. So, what is joy? How do we practice it? What does it look like? What's the point of joy?

In order to discuss joy, we have to begin by discovering what it is. What is joy? Only then can we know what we're looking for and how to have and grow in joy.

- As you reflect on the message, what stood out to you? What is something you are still thinking about?
- What is something from the message that challenged you? How are you wrestling with that challenge?
- What question(s) do you have from the message?
- What is at least one practical takeaway from the message?

Philippians 4:4–9

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. **9** What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- How have you thought of and understood joy in the past?
- Do you consider yourself a joyful person? Why or why not?
- Paul says in Galatians 5:22 that “the fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.” How is joy a “gift received” as Pastor Dustin put it?
- If joy is a gift received, how then do we receive it?
- Why is it good for us to see joy as a gift to enjoy? Think specifically about the character of God and nature of creation.
- What are things you find joy in/enjoy? How can you enjoy those things more?
- It might seem odd to think about “practicing joy,” but it’s important. What are ways you can “practice joy?” What spiritual habits should you cultivate to develop more joy in your life?
- One of the important parts of practice is how it actually shapes us into the kind of person we’re meant to be? How does God use our practice to shape us?
- As Christians we’re called to habituate joy or, simply put, be joyful. As you reflect on your self and life, what is one step you need to take to become joyful?
- Pastor Dustin began his sermon with a simple prayer. Close your time together praying this prayer of joy together out loud.

Father, we thank you that you are pure joy. We thank you that as a gift you have shared your joy with us.

Thank you that joy is not just something we can enjoy in a moment but something that we can embody and live in forever.

Because of sin and suffering, we acknowledge that joy can be difficult to find and enjoy.

May we receive from your Holy Spirit the grace of joy that your Son, Jesus, offers us. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to practice the gift of joy, to cultivate and grow in this grace each day.

By your grace may we become people of joy. And may that joy be a foretaste of the joy we will have in you forevermore.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen