

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 3, 2025

SERIES INFO

Rotten: In a world of fake smiles, quick tempers, and shallow love, we're all producing something. Every word, every choice, every action plants something in someone's heart—either life-giving or toxic. But the Spirit grows something different: love when hate comes easy, joy when life feels heavy, peace in the chaos, patience when you're pushed, kindness in a cruel world, goodness when nobody's watching, faithfulness when others walk away, gentleness in a culture that shouts, and self-control when everything says give in. That's not surface-level. That's transformation. And it might be the very thing that marks the difference between being ruled by the mess around you and being fueled by something greater.

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

If you could relive one joyful moment from your life, what would it be?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest "takeaways" you had from the message this week about the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of joy within you?

DISCUSSION

Joy vs. Happiness **Scripture: John 15:9-11**

Joy is often confused with happiness. Happiness is based on our circumstances- it is dependent on things going well. Joy flows from a deeper place; it is rooted in God's presence, His promises, and His purposes in our lives. Joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, is something that the Holy Spirit produces in us, not something that we manufacture by our own willpower. It is directly related to abiding in Christ's love and keeping His commandments.

- Can you recall a time of hardship where your spiritual resilience, anchored in Christ's love, allowed you to experience joy?
- Explain the connection between obedience and joy.

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Joy in our Trials

Scripture: James 1:2-4

Considering joy amid our trials is not a prescription for us to enjoy pain, but to recognize that God is at work in our lives, refining us to be more in shape and in tune to Christ's likeness. Perseverance develops maturity and wholeness in us. It is interesting that James tells us here to "consider," which is very different than our perspectives being tethered to our feelings. The Greek word for "consider" in this passage is *egesasthe*, which means "to lead" or "to suppose." James is encouraging us to actively "lead our thoughts" to view trials as a source of joy, rather than being led by emotions that would diminish or suppress our joy.

- Why is it often difficult to view our trials through the lens of joy? What fears or assumptions make it a challenge?
- How might the way we handle trials serve as a witness to others about the reality of Christ in us?

Rejoice- I Tell You!

Scripture: Philippians 4:4

Paul is writing from prison in Rome, chained and awaiting possible execution- yet he is telling us to "rejoice." The Greek word here for rejoice is *chairete*, which means to "be glad," or to "celebrate." It (the rejoicing) is not based on phony optimism or denial of our circumstances; it is rooted in the Lord. The word *chairete* also refers to this celebration lifestyle to be an "ongoing practice," and not just a fleeting moment of happiness.

- What does it practically mean to "rejoice in the Lord?" How is this different than just having a positive attitude?
- How can Paul "command" us to rejoice? Can joy be commanded? Does that mean that joy is something we choose or cultivate in our lives?

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- Another way to look at the above question: how do we deal with the tension between joy being a spiritual fruit that the Holy Spirit produces within us and the human responsibility to rejoice in all things?
- How can our group embody joy in community so that it serves as a witness to the watching world?

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Wrestling with Your Current Reality

- If you were to “reframe” a current struggle through the lens of James 1:2-4 above, what would it look like?
- What would it look like if you were to take one practical step this week toward, “rejoicing always?”

Do a Joy Journal:

Take a moment each day of this week to spend a few moments journaling all the ways that you could rejoice in the Lord. Share it with the group next week.

PRAYER

God of all joy, thank You that You call us to rejoice not because life is easy, but because You are faithful. Teach us to anchor our joy in You always. Let our joy be a light to others and a strength to our own faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.