



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Advent 2024

### The Journey to Joy

*John 15:11*

1. This week we talked about the Advent theme of JOY. We understand that because God sent his son Jesus, joy is possible for all who know him. Peter gives us a glimpse into the lives of first-century Christians and the joy they experienced.

**1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.**

Have you ever been filled with inexpressible joy because of your faith in Christ? If so, tell that story.

2. Whenever I study joy in the Bible, I am surprised by how often Jesus is described as full of joy and how He wants His followers to be full of joy.

Discuss these two verses, please: **John 15:11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.**

**John 17:13 I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.**

Jesus is the source and substance of our joy. How does it affect you to know Jesus wants you to have the “full measure” of His joy, that He wants His joy to be in you?

3. The Bible teaches that we should desire and even choose to have the Joy of Christ. “Rejoice” means to be glad, have joy, find joy, or choose joy.

Paul commands us to rejoice: **Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

Have you ever chosen joy? Do you believe it is possible? Pastor and Author John Ortberg says this, “You can become a joyful person. With God’s help it really is possible. The biblical writers would not command it if it were not so. But joyfulness is a learned skill. You must take responsibility for your joy.”

Do you agree that joyfulness is a learned skill? Discuss how we learn it and what you have learned about choosing joy.

4. One of the ways we choose joy is by choosing to be generous and grateful.

The Bible says, **Proverbs 11:25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.**

Have you ever experienced the joy of Christ after being generous? If so, tell that story.

Gratitude is defined as 'the quality of being thankful, and readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.' The Bible consistently guides us to gratitude and an attitude of Thanksgiving. Seven verses in the Bible link gratitude and joy.

One example is **Psalms 107:22 And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of his works with songs of joy.**

The Nazis imprisoned Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Germany and from a cold prison cell one Christmas he said, "Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy." What would you say is the link between gratitude and joy?

5. I also believe that we choose joy as we choose to freely give and receive forgiveness. It is difficult to feel joy when we are bound up in the bitter prison of unforgiveness. The Bible is very clear that we are to forgive.

**Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

Do you agree that forgiveness opens the door to joy? How so?

King David said in **Psalms 51:14 Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves, then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.**

I believe understanding and experiencing God's forgiveness is a path to joy. How might you utilize forgiveness to choose joy?