



DEPLOYING

JOY

into the world

* = KID FRIENDLY!

We could never learn to be brave and patient
if there were only joy in the world. Helen Keller

share

- ◆ Greetings, introductions, covenant, housekeeping
- * ◆ Describe some of the ways you were able to put LOVE into ACTION last week.
- * ◆ Most people find that showing LOVE can sometimes be easy—it can also be really hard. When was it easy for you to show LOVE to someone last week? What made it easy?
When was it hard for you to show LOVE? Why do think that was?

read

- * ◆ This week, our focus is on JOY as a characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit. When we talk about this kind of JOY it's important to understand we are not talking about happiness—or even other kinds of joy. This JOY comes from a deeper place than those feelings we experience while listening to beautiful music or walking in nature. This JOY is richer than the happiness that comes from being in a healthy human relationship, or having the best birthday celebration ever. It's different from the satisfaction we feel at a job well done, or winning first place. It's even more than the elation we feel at the birth of a child. All of these kinds of joy are good gifts from God, but they all represent *natural* joy and happiness which is fleeting, at best, and always circumstantial.
- * ◆ How have you recently experienced happiness or *natural* joy?
- * ◆ Now let's look at the kind of JOY the Bible talks about—JOY that is not dependent upon what is going on around us. In this passage, Peter is writing about JOY to encourage Christians who are suffering—then, in the ancient world—and us, today. Peter 1:3-8 (NIRV):
“He (Jesus) has given us new birth so that we might share in what belongs to him. This is a gift that can never be destroyed. It can never spoil or even fade away... Through faith you are kept safe by God's power. Your salvation is going to be completed...Because you know all this, you have great JOY. You have JOY even though you may have had to suffer for a little while. You may have had to suffer sadness in all kinds of trouble—but your troubles have come in order to prove that your faith is real... worth more than gold... and meant to bring praise, honor and glory to God. Even though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, you believe in him. You are filled with a glorious JOY that can't be put into words.”
- * ◆ Which part of this passage stood out when reading (hearing) it just now?
 - ◆ Is it possible to experience true JOY without a life that includes suffering?

talk

- ◆ When did you last experience the JOY Peter talked about—"JOY that can't be put into words"—JOY that didn't make any sense in the light of your circumstances? How would you describe it? Were you able to put that JOY into action by using it to make a difference in someone else's life?
- ◆ Pastor Rick Warren defines Biblical JOY this way: "It is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life...the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, AND the determined choice to praise God in every situation."
- ◆ Do you think this is a good definition of JOY as Fruit of the Spirit? Why or why not? Do you agree that both parts (ie trust and praise) are necessary for you to not only experience, but share, true JOY?
- ◆ Even though we are Christians, bearers of the Fruit of the Spirit, many of us have said at one time or another, "I feel as though I have lost my joy." This feeling may be very real, but is it really true? Do you think it is possible to lose this characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit, or is it more likely that we become disconnected from it? If so, how can we reconnect? Read **Psalm 16:11** (NRSV) and underline where/how it is we can find fullness of JOY.

**"You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore."**

How have you entered into God's presence, and there, reconnected with JOY?

- * ◆ Beginning with His birth, JOY was big part of Jesus' life here on earth. What song do we sing at Christmas that is all about JOY? In this song, who brings JOY? Who does the song say this JOY is for?
- * ◆ In what other ways do you think JOY was a part of Jesus' life? Consider that He was a man children loved, a man who was constantly being invited to parties, a man others followed, a good friend, and a great story teller.

pray

- * ◆ Pray for each other. Ask God to help each of us, our families, our church, our schools, our workplaces, and our world become more joy-filled and prepared to put JOY into action.
- ◆ Pray for the empty chair in your group to be filled.

bles

- * ♦ Say these words while making the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads:
"May JOY overflow from your heart and be a blessing others. Amen"

action

- ♦ Every morning this week pray, "God, show me how I can put JOY into ACTION today?"
- * ♦ Keep a list of ways you experience and express true JOY (not just happiness) this week.
- ♦ Notice what keeps you from releasing the JOY of Christ that is in you.

* WEEK 2 MEMORY VERSE

*"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete."*

John 15:11

40DAYS commitments

1. HEAR all messages in the Action series
2. READ the daily Bible verses
3. CONNECT in a small group
4. REMEMBER the weekly memory verse
5. SERVE on Impact Weekend Nov 6-7
6. PRAY we are all moved to ACTION to deploy the Fruit of the Spirit into the world
7. SHARE at least one characteristic of the Fruit of Spirit each day

* daily Bible readings

Try reading the passages in the translations suggested (biblegateway.com) Conclude each reading with, "Please, God, help me put your JOY into ACTION."

1. Psalm 51:12 (NLT)
2. Nehemiah 8:10b (NIV)
3. Luke 2:10 (NLT)
4. Romans 12:12 (NIV)
5. Jeremiah 31:13b (NLT)
6. Romans 15:13 (NLT)
7. Psalm 94:19 (NLV)



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