

“The Christmas Promise”

Week 2 - JOY

warm-up

Group Ice Breaker: JOY

Ask each group member to write down 3-5 things that come to mind in their personal lives when they hear the word, “JOY.” Share these with each other to cultivate a group atmosphere of JOY.

word & application

John 15:7-13

“But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Discussion & Application: *Explore these points and questions through in-depth conversation*

What’s the blessing that Jesus wants us to experience here? - OVERFLOWING JOY

What’s the principle tied to this blessing? – Laying down our lives in order to love others, in response to Jesus Christ’s model of laying His life down to love us:

Jesus left his station in the heavenly realm and came to earth in the humble form of a baby. He completely relied on the selfless love of those he already ruled to provide his every need. He submitted to the authority of those he was already Lord of while he grew in wisdom, stature and favor among humans. He walked away from a life of self-sufficiency and into a ministry that would eventually lead to his sacrificial death. He rose again and offered forgiveness to those who betrayed and persecuted him. And as he ascended into Heaven, he sent us the power of the Holy Spirit so that we could live with incredible spiritual abundance.

And THIS BROUGHT HIM JOY

Discussion Questions:

- Isn’t it interesting that we can sometimes get so caught up in “obeying” the letter of the law (behavioral modification), that we can forget to simply obey JESUS’S commandment: “Love each other the same way I’ve loved you”?
- How would you describe the model that Jesus gave us for loving one another?
- Deep question** – *How does the pursuit of building our own lives potentially conflict with the joy of becoming a conduit of love for others?*
- Getting Personal** – *How is it possible that we can obtain more joy in our lives by providing love to others than by seeking to fulfill our own needs?*

prayer

Share recent “God moments.” Celebrate some wins in your lives. Pray over requests. Pray that as we lay aside some seemingly important yet eternally unfruitful pursuits in our lives and make room for the eternal priority of loving others, that we truly experience the JOY that Jesus spoke of.