



Week 8 - Joy-Keepers, Joy-Facilitators

WE TRAIN PEOPLE TO LOVE GOD & THEIR BODIES.

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 14:17

“The joy of Jesus was His absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice to His Father— the joy of doing that which the Father sent Him to do.”

Oswald Chambers

Joy is part of our inheritance in Christ, purchased at the Cross. Joy was so important that Jesus endured the Cross to redeem and restore JOY to us. It is the Father's desire that our joy would be FULL. God intends life to be full of JOY in the midst of every circumstance. Romans 14:17 above tells us that the very kingdom of God **is** joy in the Holy Spirit. As God-first leaders, we must understand that joy goes beyond feeling and circumstance to foundational identity in Christ. We fight for joy – first for ourselves and then for others.

Nehemiah 8:10b gives a familiar reference to the joy that God gives. *“This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”* In context, Nehemiah is speaking to the Jewish people who have heard the reading of God's law and whose hearts have been overcome with repentant sorrow. The priest, Ezra, read the law and the people were broken by the state of their own hearts and their land. Nehemiah assures them that because they have returned to the Lord, they no longer have to grieve, but can receive the joy that comes from Jehovah Himself, and will bring great strength. As the leader, he points their attention and hearts to the gift of joy that comes from a right relationship with God Himself. As leaders, one of our privileges involves pointing the hearts of those we lead to the joy of a right relationship with God.

“We are not left to search for joy; it is brought to our doors by the love of God our Father; joy refined and satisfying, befitting immortal spirits. God has not left us to wander among those unsatisfactory things which mock the chase which they invite; he has given us appetites which carnal things cannot content, and he has provided suitable satisfaction for those appetites; he has stored up at his right hand pleasures for evermore, which even now he reveals by his Spirit to those chosen ones whom he has taught to long for them.”

Charles Spurgeon



The joy Nehemiah refers to here is most definitely *the joy which God gives* and also *the joy which God Himself possesses and experiences*. “God gives us joy because He is joyful. He is the source of joy, just as He is the source of love, of truth, of mercy, and so on. Joy is both a description of God and a description of what He gives.”¹ As He is, so are we in the world! (1 John 4:17)

Nehemiah demonstrates that the believer’s joy comes from God Himself, and *THIS* joy is our strength. How do we find and keep this joy? Why does joy seem so fleeting or to be only in some believers’ lives? Charles Spurgeon speaks of this joy: *“It springs from God, and has God for its object. The believer who is in a spiritually healthy state rejoices mainly in God himself; he is happy because there is a God, and because God is in his person and character what he is.”*²

“All the attributes of God become well-springs of joy to the thoughtful, contemplative believer; for such a man says within his soul, “All these attributes of my God are mine: his power, my protection; his wisdom, my guidance; his faithfulness, my foundation; his grace, my salvation.” He is a God who cannot lie, faithful and true to his promise; he is all love, and at the same time infinitely just, supremely holy. Why, the contemplation of God to one who knows that this God is his God for ever and ever, is enough to make the eyes overflow with tears, because of the deep, mysterious, unutterable bliss which fills the heart.”

Charles Spurgeon

Biblical joy finds its basis, strength and sustenance in a focus on God Himself. Oftentimes, joy seems lacking in our lives or not accessible. However, joy is the right and duty of every believer. We often lack joy because our eyes are on ourselves or our circumstances instead of on God!

How does joy play a part in leadership? Anyone who has come through the various Revelation Wellness trainings or events has tasted the joy of the Father. Joy is a pillar of this ministry because it is a key to God’s kingdom.

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/13-joy-god>

² <https://archive.spurgeon.org/sermons/1027.ph,,,is usp>



Those we lead will mimic and desire to be like us. Jesus placed high value and emphasis on joy. In John 15:11, Jesus states: *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.* He speaks to us to give us joy – His word anchors us and gives us the freedom to trust Him.

One of the ways we can understand what God values and deems important is how often He speaks of it in His word. In the Bible, the word “joy” occurs 182 times in the NASB translation. The word “rejoice” occurs 149 times. That is a HUGE number! Joy and rejoicing are commodities of the Kingdom itself. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray that God’s Kingdom would come and His will would be done here on earth, that included our lives overflowing with joy. Joy is rooted in REJOICING and is a fruit of faith in our lives.

“Living a full and overflowing life does not rest in bodily health, in circumstances, nor even in seeing God’s work succeed, but in the perfect understanding of God, and in the same fellowship and oneness with Him that Jesus Himself enjoyed. But the first thing that will hinder this joy is the subtle irritability caused by giving too much thought to our circumstances. Jesus said, “...the cares of this world,...choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). And before we even realize what has happened, we are caught up in our cares.” Oswald Chambers

The cares of this world will steal our joy. Worry chokes faith and joy. As followers of the King, we learn to develop a focus on eternity through the practical keys below.

Practical Joy Steps for Leadership and Life

- **Joy focuses on the Father.** Matt. 6:33, Luke 22:42
- **Joy’s eyes focus on eternity.** Col. 3:2
- **Joy grows from a THANKFUL heart.** Psalm 138
- **Joy delights in obedience.** Psalm 40:8
- **Joy delights in God and receives His delight.** Psalm 16:5-6, 11
- **Joy results from FAITH in God and His promises.** Hebrews 11:6



- **Joy comes from His presence - ABIDING IS THE SOURCE OF JOY.** John 15
- **Joy TRUSTS God's plan and might in every circumstance and relationship.** Prov. 3:5-6
- **Joy sustains us during the hardest and most tragic circumstances.** Rom. 8:28
- **Joy is a choice.** Psalm 27:6b, Heb. 13:15

Leadership in God's Kingdom is not about control, but about trust and obedience. From this place of *responding* instead of *reacting* and *controlling* comes JOY. Joy understands that we are responsible only for our part (our obedience, actions, and attitudes). God does His part, and there is the other part – the other people in our circumstances. We must learn to do what we know to do and then let go. Joy comes when we LET GO of the other person's part. We are not responsible for other people's actions or reactions. As a friend, parent, spouse, employee, or employer, a leader's first responsibility is to GOD alone – to obey what He has given us to do or say, and then TRUST and relinquish control. Joy does not mean simply happiness. Joy entails a sense of confidence that one's trust has been placed in the One who is sovereign and in charge.

"We tend to think of joy as something that ebbs and flows depending on life's circumstances. But we don't lose joy, as though one day we have it and the next day it's gone, oh darn. Joy is something that we have to choose and work for. Like the ability to run for an hour, it doesn't come automatically. It needs cultivation."

Francis Chan
Crazy Love

Suffering is part of our lives here on Earth. God wants to give us eternal joy amid circumstances that threaten to upset, confound and destroy us. Suffering serves us well when we look to Jesus for strength, direction and when it keeps our perspective on the truth that we are not made for this world but for eternity. James 1 grants us perspective on life's suffering:

"Don't run from tests and hardships, brothers and sisters. As difficult as they are, you will ultimately find joy in them; if you embrace them, your faith will blossom under pressure and teach you true patience as you endure. And true patience brought on by endurance will equip you to



complete the long journey and cross the finish line— mature, complete, and wanting nothing.” James 1:2-4 Voice

Most translations render this text: **“Count it all joy...”** In the Message translation, it says: **“Consider it a sheer gift...when tests and challenges come at you from all sides.”** This seems impossible. And apart from the power of the Holy Spirit in us, it is impossible. Good news—we are NOT without Him! When faced with hard circumstances, broken hearts, and the pain of life here on earth, James commands us to consider these hard things as JOY, as a gift to us. Joy’s perspective is eternal – knowing that whatever we experience here is not random. *Our Father is in charge*—any pain or circumstance that comes into our lives does not surprise our Father. Suffering sometimes comes from our own actions or simply because we live in a fallen world. The glorious promise of Romans 8:28 sustains us – God will work ALL things for our good. In John 16:33, Jesus reassures us: *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

Our pain is not a sign of God having broken His promises to us. Pain will remain as long as we live here on Earth. What God does promise us is that as we learn to hold both suffering and joy in our hands and offer ourselves to Him in worship and surrender, He, in turn, gives us Himself. We can be confident that any painful circumstances will be used for God’s glory and for our good. 2 Corinthians 1:4-7 tells us that God comforts us in our pain and sorrow, so we are then equipped to minister the same comfort to others. God desires to sustain us with His joy in every pain, sorrow, and pressing circumstance. As leaders, we can be confident that God will use our own painful experiences to bring greater freedom and healing to others. Nothing is wasted in the kingdom of God. What an amazing gift!

**“Love is a far better sustainer than grit.
Joy is a far greater strength than
intensity.”**

Luke LeFevre

Joy is not EASY. It is a fruit of God’s Spirit in our lives. Fruit grows when fed and watered. Feed your joy by His word; water your joy by the Spirit. Abide – trust and obey. Intimacy and identity. He is our

unrelenting source of a wellspring of joy.

Available to every believer is a joy *“unspeakable and full of glory”* (1 Peter 1:8), beyond what we have known and experienced. It is born out of intimacy –



knowing and being known – with God Himself. Our world is familiar with sorrow, pain, and hurt. May we become sons and daughters of the God who is Himself JOY, taking His joy into every circumstance and leading from joy.

A final note: One of the greatest traps and pitfalls of leadership is when the to-dos and lists and every day “musts” take precedence over intimate, personal time with the Lord. When our hearts become dry, when our get-to’s become have-to’s, it is time to stop and get back into the secret place with the Father. There is NO OTHER WAY to the joy and peace and confidence and freedom He has for us.

Don't take yourself so seriously. It is so easy to get too serious about life, leading, relationships, and circumstances. Sometimes we need to lighten up and take ourselves off the hook. Focus on HIM instead of self. Remember, He is the point! Joy comes with relinquishing control and trusting the King. Have and facilitate FUN!

**“His command to ‘rejoice
always’ really is an expression
of His desire for us to have
joy.”**

Bill Johnson



Training Exercise—Day #1 Train Joy

After spending time with the Father, go to www.blueletterbible.com. In the search bar, enter "JOY" or "REJOICE".

Look through the verses and choose one or two that stick out to you.

Write the verse(s) out.

What does it tell you about kingdom JOY?

What does it prompt you to do, or how to respond?

As a result of reading/studying this verse, what is your "I WILL" statement?

What is an area where joy seems elusive to you? Sit and talk, or journal about it, to the Lord. Ask Him for insight into joy and what it looks like FOR YOU.

Memorize this verse during the week and share it with your Swim Buddy.

Check in with your swim buddy.



Training Exercise—Day #2 – The Joy of the Lord-Our strength

After you spend time with the Father, write out a list of things that bring you joy. Maybe turn on worship music and begin to think about what creates, sparks, and fosters joy in your soul. He is interested in the delights and desires of your heart!

Now write out the joy-stealers and joy-killers in your life. How does His word speak to these areas?

He wants you to know His joy in every area and circumstance of your life. How will you begin to apply His joy to your life?

Go back to the list of Practical Joy Steps. Choose one or two that the Holy Spirit highlights or challenges you with. Take that into your intimate time with your Lord. Let Him show you His joy and cover your soul in it!

Let's dive in!!!

Check in with your swim buddy.

"The Lord Jesus is a deep sea of joy. My soul shall dive in."

Charles Spurgeon



Training Exercise—Day #3 – Living with JOY

After you spend time with the Father, please listen to this sermon. You can copy and paste the link below or you can search the name below:

Francis Chan - Living with Joy

<https://youtu.be/DmZcXSORVOM>

How does the COMMAND to rejoice challenge you? What fruit of joy are you seeing in your life?

Make notes of what the Holy Spirit is showing you.

Connect with your swim buddy. Share your experience, what you learned, and what challenged you.

“When life gets painful or doesn’t go as we hoped, it’s ok if a little of our joy seeps away. The bible teaches that true joy is formed in the midst of the difficult seasons of life.”

Francis Chan – Crazy Love



A Liturgy for Embracing both Joy and Sorrow

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I find this burden of loss too heavy, and shrink from
the necessary experience of grief.

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I become so mired in yesterday's hurts that I miss
entirely the living gifts this day might hold.

Let me neither ignore my pain, pretending all is ok when it isn't, nor coddle &
magnify my pain, so that I dull my capacity to experience
all that remains good in this life.

For joy that denies sorrow is neither hard-won, nor true, nor eternal.
It is not real joy at all.

And sorrow that refuses to make space for the return of joy and hope, in the end,
becomes nothing more than a temple for the worship of my own woundedness.

So give me strength, O God, to feel this grief deeply, never to hide my heart from it.
And give me also hope enough to remain open to surprising encounters with joy,
As one on a woodland path might stumble suddenly into
dapplings of golden light.

Amidst the pain that ladens these days, give me courage, O Lord;
courage to live them fully, to love and to allow myself to be loved,
to remember, grieve, & honor what was,

To live with thanksgiving in what is, and to invest in the hope of what will be.

Be at work gilding these long heartbreaks with the advent of new joys, good
friendships, true fellowships, unexpected delights.

Remind me again and again of Your goodness, Your presence, Your promises.

For this is who we are: a people of The Promise- a people shaped in the image of
the God whose very being generates all joy in the universe,
yet who also weeps and grieves its brokenness.

So we, Your children, are also at liberty to lament our losses, even as we
simultaneously rejoice in the hope of their coming restoration.

Let me learn now, O Lord, to do this as naturally as the inhale and exhale
of a single breath:



To breathe out sorrow,
To breathe in joy.

To breathe out lament,
To breathe in hope.

To breathe out pain,
To breathe in comfort.

To breathe out sorrow,
To breathe in joy.

In one hand I grasp the burden of my grief, while with the other I reach for the
hope of grief's redemption.

And here, between the tension of the two; between what was and what will be, in
the very is of now, let my heart be surprised by, shaped by, warmed by, remade by,
The same joy that forever wells within and radiates from Your heart, O God.

Amen.

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