

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

— *Hebrews 12:1-2*

Discussion/Journal Questions

As we are talking about joy today, share a joy moment you anticipate having in the near future?

Have two or three people read Hebrews 12:1-2 out loud slowly. After some time of reflection, ask each other what words, phrases, or ideas stand out to everyone. What questions come to mind as you meditate on this scripture?

Do you believe that Jesus was the most joyful person who ever lived? Why or why not?

If Jesus was a man of great joy, what does that tell us about the Father?

The first habit shared from the life of Jesus was the habit of *calming*. Jesus would often withdraw from crowds to spend time in solitude with His Father. How do our over-busy lifestyles hinder our joy?

How would your daily life be different if you practiced deliberate calming practices regularly?

Think about your thinking. Take note of how you feel right now, then take a minute or two and deliberately focus on something you are grateful for? How do you feel after this appreciation moment versus before?

Telling stories of joyful moments or difficult times that ended joyfully can have a powerful impact on the teller and the receiver of the story. Who do you know that is good at sharing these types of stories? What can you learn from them?

What toxic thoughts do you find yourself gravitating towards? Do you attack those thoughts or let them take control? What truth from scripture can you turn to in order to replace those thoughts?

Our capacity for joy (our joy bucket) can grow as we deliberately stir up joy through appreciation and relational connection with others. The 28-Day Joy Challenge is a good way to intentionally grow our joy buckets: <https://4habits.org/4-habits-of-joy-filled-people/#28day>.

As you pray for each other, share both praises and prayer requests so that you can rejoice together.