

THE TAKE AWAY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sunday, May 15, 2022
KEEPING JOY

Message Summary:

This week in our series on JOY, Pastor Jordan Carter taught us how to keep our joy. Joy is a gift that accompanies salvation. Having joy comes from knowing God and being in relationship with Him. Biblical joy is choosing to respond to external circumstances with inner contentment and satisfaction, because we know that God will use these experiences to accomplish His work in and through our lives. But we cannot minimize the fact that sometimes it can be hard to access or stir up joy. Cloudy skies of the soul can at times block what we believe to be the joy of the sun, or you could say, Son. It's hard when we know something to be true, but we aren't feeling it or don't know how to access it for ourselves. A gift is no good to you if you don't know how to open it. And we have an enemy who knows just what to throw in our way to distract us or steal our joy. One of the most successful strategies he has for stealing our joy is the comparison trap. Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." When we make the mistake of comparing ourselves to others – their finances, their marriage, their health, their success, their family, their spiritual life – we make the same mistake Eve made in the garden when she bit the apple. She compared herself to God and desired to be like Him in a way that was not her place, and her comparison became the gateway to her fall. The comparison to God robbed Adam and Eve of a joy that no one else in the world has experienced: the joy of walking with the Lord unhindered by sin. You see, the enemy can't steal what is inherently and permanently yours, but he can make you believe you don't really have joy. In order to keep our joy, we have to combat comparison by setting boundaries between ourselves and others, by being present in and enjoying the moment God has given us, and by practicing gratefulness for what we do have. Only then can we keep the joy God gave us!

Key Scriptures:

- [1 Peter 1:8-9 NIV] 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**, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- [Proverbs 13:12 NIV] 12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things in your life that threaten your joy?
2. Why is comparison dangerous?
3. How can you fight for your joy by combating comparison?
4. How do you protect your joy?

Life Application:

This week as you study the key scriptures, consider what Pastor Jordan said, "Comparing yourself to others will displace your joy and cause you to forget that everything you really need, you have right now in Christ Jesus." Are you struggling with the comparison trap? Are you constantly comparing yourself to others and falling short? Are you always wishing you were anywhere other than where you are now? Are you struggling to be grateful for what you have? Ask God to restore your joy. You have to learn to cast all your care on the Lord, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). You have to press into the moment that God has given to you now and thank Him for all He has given to you. Push back comparison and stir up joy in your life once again!