



Small Group Discussion Guide

Series: Week 2

Fruit of the Spirit

Joy

Opening Question

1. When you hear the word *joy*, what comes to mind?
2. What is something that made you “happy” recently? How long did that feeling last?

Introduction: Happiness vs. Joy

We live in a culture chasing happiness. Reports from outlets like the The Washington Post have highlighted research suggesting Americans are increasingly unhappy—even in strong economic seasons. Researchers point to addiction patterns (substances, gambling, pornography, internet, social media) and rising isolation as major contributors.

But Scripture introduces something deeper than happiness—**JOY**.

- **Happiness** = based on circumstances (from “happenstance”)
- **Joy** = a deep delight rooted in God, regardless of circumstances

Key Scriptures:

- Psalm 16:11 – Joy is found in God’s presence.
- Galatians 5:22–23 – Joy is fruit of the Spirit.
- Nehemiah 8:10 – “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Read Together: Philippians 1:1–11

Paul writes about joy while imprisoned. That alone tells us joy is not circumstantial.

1. Joy Comes by Remembering the Good

Philippians 1:3–5

Paul had been beaten and imprisoned in Philippi (see Acts 16). Yet when he remembers them, he recalls partnership—not pain.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it easier to rehearse hurt than remember good?
- How does repeatedly revisiting past wounds affect your present joy?
- What would it look like to “rewrite the narrative” of your story?

2. Joy Comes by Recognizing God Is at Work

Philippians 1:6

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...”

Paul had grace for people because he knew God was still working on them—and on himself.

Discussion Questions:

- Who in your life frustrates you right now?
- How would your attitude shift if you truly believed God was working in them?
- What area is God still working on in you?

3. Joy Comes Through Relationships

Philippians 1:7–8

Paul says, “I hold you in my heart.”

Joy is relational.

Research continues to show that isolation diminishes both physical and emotional health. God Himself said it is not good for people to be alone.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think isolation is so common today?
- What keeps people from fully engaging in community?
- How has Christian community strengthened you?

4. Joy Comes When We Pray for Others

Philippians 1:4, 9–11

Paul says he prays with joy.

When you pray for others:

- Your heart softens.
- Your focus shifts from self to God.
- Your love grows.

Discussion Questions:

- How does praying for someone change your attitude toward them?
- Is there someone difficult in your life you need to begin praying for?

5. Joy Comes When We Trust God Is in Control

- Proverbs 16:9
- Psalm 22:28

Joy is the settled confidence that God is sovereign over your life.

Paul sang in prison. Why? Because his joy was anchored in sovereignty, not circumstance.

Discussion Questions:

- What situation in your life feels out of control right now?
- How would your anxiety shift if you truly trusted God with that outcome?

Personal Reflection Questions

Quietly consider:

- Am I chasing happiness or cultivating joy?
- Am I rehearsing hurts or remembering good?
- Am I isolated or invested in relationships?
- Am I critical or grace-filled?
- Strength for the journey.