



GUIDED BIBLE STUDY

Living Out Joy

Speaker: Jill Smith

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Highlighted Scripture

- **Romans 5:8 (NASB 2020)**

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Paul grounds our confidence in Christ's death for sinners. God's love reaches us before we can present a record of good behavior. Jill's invitation to approach God with trust begins here: receive His grace and respond with gratitude.

- **John 14:15 (NASB 2020)**

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

As Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure, He connects love with obedience and promises the Holy Spirit's help. Loving Him takes shape in faithful choices. Growth involves repentance, practice, and dependence on God; obedience is our response to His love.

- **Luke 2:10 (NASB 2020)**

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;"

The angel announces Jesus' birth to frightened shepherds. The good news centers on the coming Savior. Jill points us to Him as the foundation of joy, even when our circumstances remain difficult.

- **Psalms 51:12 (NASB 2020)**

"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit."

This request belongs to David's prayer of repentance. Restored joy includes honestly bringing our sin to God and asking Him to renew our willingness to follow Him. We can seek His mercy when we have failed.

- **Psalms 16:11 (NASB 2020)**

"You will make known to me the way of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

David expresses confidence in God as his refuge and lasting delight. We learn to seek joy in knowing God and walking in His way. That confidence gives us hope while still leaving room for honest grief and struggle.

Discussion Questions

- Jill asks, 'What is your approach towards God?' What do you expect from Him after a failure, and what has shaped that expectation?
- How does Christ's love for sinners challenge your tendency to earn God's approval through a checklist?
- How could obedience express your love for Jesus in a difficult situation, even before you feel delight?
- What helps you spend attentive time with Jesus through Scripture and prayer? What crowds out that time?
- How could these passages encourage someone who loves God but is grieving or struggling to experience joy?

Reflection Challenge

For five days, set aside ten quiet minutes with God. Read one highlighted passage with its surrounding verses, bring Him one real concern, and let what you learn guide one loving action.

Ask yourself:

- When I fail, do I hide from God, bargain with Him, or turn to Him honestly?
- What have I assumed about God's character that I need to examine through Scripture?
- Where am I asking God to renew both my joy and my willingness to obey?

Try this:

- Write one truth the passage reveals about God. Begin your prayer by thanking Him for it.
- Pray Psalm 51:12 slowly. Confess sin honestly and identify one step of repentance.
- Ask God's help to apologize, serve someone quietly, or speak kindly in a tense conversation.
- After five days, share one discovery and one practice you will continue with a trusted Christian friend.

Remember

- Christ's death shows God's love for sinners before they could earn it.
- Knowing Jesus reshapes how we approach God and how we treat others.
- Love for Jesus takes expression in obedience, with the Holy Spirit's help.
- Repentance brings our failures into God's presence and asks for renewed willingness.
- Joy rests in the Savior and can grow alongside grief, questions, and difficult circumstances.
- Time in Scripture and honest prayer helps us learn God's character and walk with Him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus for us while we were still sinners. Help us approach You with trust and honesty. Through Your Word, teach us to know Your character. Forgive our sin and restore the joy of Your salvation. Deepen our love for Jesus. By Your Spirit, give us willing hearts to obey, serve with gratitude, and return to You when we fail. Help us seek Your presence through joy and sorrow.

In Jesus' name, Amen.