



LIFEgroup STUDY GUIDE

What you will need to supplement this guide:

1. A copy of the outline provided for notes on this message (copy from message or downloaded from the COASTAL APP).
2. A Bible or Bible APP to refer to verses.

PURSUING LIFE TOGETHER

SUNDAY MESSAGE REVIEW

NOTE to the LIFEgroup Leader: This guide is provided as a tool to assist you in facilitating a structured discussion with your group. When used in conjunction with the outline notes and a Bible this tool will ensure that your group will *Engage Authentically*. The questions are merely recommended “talk starters”. It is important for you to let God help you navigate through the conversation as you *pursue life together* as a group.

OPEN IN PRAYER

STARTER QUESTIONS:

Where have you seen God at work in your life since we last met?

What stood out to you from the message this week?

MAIN IDEA:

- REVIEW THE MAIN TOPIC OF THE MESSAGE. Allow time for discussion
- READ THE MAIN SCRIPTURE FROM THE MESSAGE OUTLINE.

How did this verse speak to you in your life?

- REVIEW THE SUB-TOPICS of the MESSAGE.

Have someone read each of the verses that were highlighted in the message, and briefly discuss.

Is there an area that you feel God is speaking to you through this message?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

- SUMMARIZE the main idea of this message.

Would anyone like to share your thoughts about what we discussed today?

How can we pray for you as a group?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

GOOD TIDINGS

“Joy to the World”

"Your brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones."

-Neuroscientist Rick Hanson, in “Buddha’s Brain”

“The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”
Luke 2:10-11 (KJV)

Joy isn’t just something we feel; it’s also something we choose.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
Philippians 4:4-8 (NIV)

“Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.”

-Henri Nouwen

How can we choose joy?

1. Nearfulness

“The Lord is near ... do not be anxious ...”

Philippians 4:5 (NIV)

Your idea of who God is will determine how you experience life!

“I will go to God – the Source of all my joy.” Psalm 43:4 (NLT)

(Jesus): *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

John 15:11 (NIV)

(Paul): *“I want to know Christ!”*

Philippians 3:10 (NIV)

2. Thoughtfulness

“Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Paul says to think about: _____ Today’s media invites you to think about: _____

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| *What is true | *What is <u>untrue</u> |
| *What is noble | *What is <u>ignoble</u> |
| *What is right | *What is <u>wrong</u> |
| *What is pure | *What is <u>impure</u> |
| *What is lovely | *What is <u>ugly</u> |
| *What is admirable | *What is <u>dishonorable</u> |
| *What is excellent | *What is <u>crude</u> |
| *What is praiseworthy | *What is <u>blameworthy</u> |

“The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”
-John Milton, “Paradise Lost”

3. Thankfulness

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving ...”
Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

When we complain, we make 3 dangerous assumptions:

- We’re questioning God's wisdom.
- We’re doubting God's care.
- We’re forgetting God's goodness.

So, if you want to raise the levels of joy in your life, learn to do what Paul’s recommending:

Practice:

- Thankfulness (being grateful for what God has blessed me with)
- Thoughtfulness (feeding your mind with the goodness of God)
- Nearfulness (taking every opportunity to lean into God, the ultimate source of joy)