

# RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

## Community Group Discussion Guide – Trail Markers Week #2

Joy / April 18, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor



### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | If You Could...
  - If you could be in the Guinness World Records book, what record-breaking feat would you attempt?
  - If you could have an extra hour of free time every day, how would you use this time?
  - If you could give a piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?
2. The Bible articulates that God rejoices with great joy over his created children who love and honor him. As you reflect on this truth, how does it make you feel? Is this your typical understanding of how God sees you, or is it something else? Explain your answer.

**Psalms 147:7-11 (NIV)** – <sup>7</sup>Sing to the Lord with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp. <sup>8</sup>He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. <sup>9</sup>He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. <sup>10</sup>His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; <sup>11</sup>the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

**Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)** – The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”

### DIVING DEEPER

3. Ready and study each of the following texts. What is taught about joy in these passages?

**John 15:9-12 (NLT)** – <sup>9</sup>“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! <sup>12</sup>This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.

**John 16:16-22 (NLT)** – <sup>16</sup>“In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.” <sup>17</sup>Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’?” <sup>18</sup>And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.” <sup>19</sup>Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. <sup>20</sup>I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. <sup>21</sup>It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. <sup>22</sup>So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.

**1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV)** – <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

4. Pastor Paul laid out the principle that when we follow God's path – when we obey His commandments – our joy flourishes. How have you experienced this in your time following God? Is there a specific story or pattern of obedience that stands out as an illustration of your experience?

**Psalm 19:8 (NLT)** – The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living.

## TAKING IT HOME

5. If a fellow Christian lost his sense of joy because of some tragedy or difficult situation, how could you help him rediscover the deep, abiding joy of Jesus Christ?

If you're currently experiencing a lack of joy, what do you believe is causing this? What help could you use from God? How can your Community Group come alongside you with support and prayer?

6. Read Ecclesiastes 8:15 and 9:7-10 together. In context, these verses come as the Preacher (i.e., the writer of Ecclesiastes; see 1:1) grapples with the harsh realities – specifically the unfairness, shortness, and unpredictability – of living in a broken world. As we accept these conditions, we're called to experience an urgency to enjoy every good gift that God gives us.

Do you generally find it easy or hard to experience joy in the small/routine aspects of life? Explain your answer. How can you put these verses from Ecclesiastes into practice over the coming weeks?

**Ecclesiastes 8:15 (ESV)** – And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

**Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 (ESV)** — <sup>7</sup>Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. <sup>8</sup>Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. <sup>9</sup>Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. <sup>10</sup>Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2021 Men's Conference | There is a desire in all men to be better and do more, but an extraordinary life isn't found sitting on the sidelines. Men, hang out with us on Saturday June 12th at Men's Conference for a day of spiritual renewal, motivating messages from Mark Driscoll and yes, some manly fun. Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase. To learn more and purchase a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-mens-conference-tickets-143828790785?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.
2. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary (WOBE) | We're having a night of worship and prophetic ministry on Sunday, May 2nd at 6:30pm at our Mason Campus. As we gather to exalt the name of Jesus Christ, you will encounter the power of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. Come expectantly, come ready to see God move, and come to seek the extraordinary life.
3. Plan A Visit | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we'd love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFG0TgizStLj>.