

# JOY → Cultivate

## Discussion Guide

### **Big Picture**

The joy of the Lord is our strength, and endures in us even through painful circumstances. It is not a quick-fix emotional choice or determined by external factors, but is cultivated in us by a life of gratitude and celebration, and by faithful rest, reflection, and reliance on God our Father.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What helps you to understand in your heart how much God loves you? It could be a passage from the Bible, a personal experience, or even a song or picture.
2. When do you most often find time to rest in God's presence?
3. What blessings has God revealed to you recently?
4. What is one spiritual milestone you would like to celebrate this year?
5. What is God inviting you to do with what you've heard in this message?

## Sermon Notes

**Happiness: triggered externally. A fleeting emotion based on people, things, places, thoughts, and events.**

**Joy: cultivated internally. A deep and enduring emotion that persists no matter the circumstance.**

**John 15:11** "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

**"We will not understand God until we understand this about him: 'God is the happiest being in the universe.' God also knows sorrow. Jesus is remembered, among other things, as a 'man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' But the sorrow of God, like the anger of God, is his temporary response to a fallen world. The sorrow will be banished forever from his heart on the day the world is set right. Joy is God's basic character. Joy is his eternal destiny." - John Ortberg**

**Job 38:4-7** "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"

**Luke 2:10** "The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'"

### **Cultivate Gratitude and Celebration**

**"The decision to set the mind on the higher things of life is an act of the will. It is not something that falls on our heads. It is the result of a consciously chosen way of thinking and living. When we choose this way, the healing and redemption in Christ will break into the inner recesses of our lives and relationships, and the inevitable result will be joy." - Richard Foster**

**"The more we practice the discipline of celebration, the more it will become our instinct. Instead of passing over moments of grace and redemption, we will mark them, and hope and love will seep into our cynical world." - Jon Tyson**

**John 15:11** "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

**John 15:9-10** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love."

### **Remain in the Father's Love**