

STUDY 2

Joy in the New Testament

All that the people of God in the Old Testament had looked toward, was fulfilled with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Messiah, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. But that reality doesn't mean that the people of God in the New Testament lived in a state of perpetual goodness. Remember, in the books of Philippians and Ephesians (and the other prison epistles), Paul was writing during a bleak situation of imprisonment. Yet, he spoke of living in fullness of joy with great faith, relying on the power of Christ within him. Let's dig into how joy could be an identifier of the believers in the New Testament.

Read:**2 Corinthians 8:1-3 (NIV)**

"And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability."

Discuss:

- How could these believers in the region of Philippi be so generous in the midst of their trials?
- How could that generosity be rooted in overflowing joy when they were experiencing poverty?
- Read James 1:2-4 in a variety of translations and paraphrases and discuss the many ways "count it all joy" is communicated.

Share:

Are there times in your life when you have been able to live out these verses by considering joy?

Read:**1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)**

"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."

Discuss:

- In what ways does this passage speak to the sure foundation that is our ultimate and consistent source of joy?
- Discuss the contrast of "though you" in the context of this verse and why it is important.
- Have you ever had a surprise you were planning for someone you love and you just had to tell somebody else about it because you were so excited? This is the way of joy – it compels us to share it with others! The scriptures are filled with verses that speak of OUR joy, collectively. (Psalm 18:25 is one example!)

Pray:

Share prayers of thanksgiving as you rejoice together and are glad in Him.

