

STUDY 3

Joy in Today

The Book of Psalms is filled with both lament and praises. And in Luke, chapter 10, Jesus told his followers that when people rejected them, they were to rejoice and be glad. And then Paul wrote of his despair and his rejoicing. Throughout history, God's people have been called to this unique life – rejoicing in the midst of... Let's consider how we might enter into and remain in this way of living.

Read:**John 15:4-11 (NIV)**

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." "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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Discuss:

- Let's start with verse 11 – Jesus explained that for His joy to be in them and for their joy to be complete (whole, mature, filled to the brim), it was crucial that they remain connected to Him.
- What does it look like to "remain in the vine" and why is it foundational to our joy?
- What makes remaining so difficult and what do we need to do each time we fail to remain?

Read:**Psalms 16:8-9 (NIV)**

"I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,"

Discuss:

- What is the difference between the illustrations of 1) remaining in the vine and 2) focusing our eyes?
- What causes us to "not be shaken" and how is that even possible?
- What can we do to keep our eyes always on the Lord and what might be a hindrance?

Pray:

When David, in his sin, was confronted by the prophet Nathan, he made this request of God in Psalm 51:12 (NIV) "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." But before he made that request (check out the earlier verses in this Psalm and 2 Samuel 12:13) he confessed, repented, asked to be cleansed, and asked God to clean his heart.

Spend some time in individual, silent confession, together, ask the Lord to restore the JOY of your salvation and thank God for who He is.

