

YEAR OF GROWTH

JOY WEEK 4

EXERCISE

How To Grow in Joy:

It is important to understand the meaning of joy and to see examples of this characteristic in Scripture. Yet, it is also important to do the work necessary to have and to develop true joy. Our focus will be on passages that teach what one must do to have and to grow in joyfulness.

Day One – Sunday

Reflect on the definitions of the words that God used to describe joy. Think back over the previous lessons. Read again the passages that you have written. Recall the verses you have memorized. Focus on the meaning of joy and prepare to exercise in developing this characteristic.

Day Two – Monday

Philippians 4:4

True joy is found in the Lord. The word ‘rejoice’ is seen 11 times in the book of Philippians. The word ‘joy’ is used 6 times. In this epistle Paul teaches that the Christian life is one of joy because of one’s salvation and fellowship with God. In order to have true, lasting joy, one must be in Christ.

Day Three – Tuesday

Acts 8:5-8

True joy comes from hearing the Word of God. This is seen on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:8), and in the conversion of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:39). Learning the truth of salvation is like finding hidden treasure. Jesus said that one who finds it “for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath” to obtain it (Matthew 13:44). To increase joy, we must study and learn God’s Word.

Day Four – Wednesday**Psalm 126**

Joy is found in teaching the Word of God. It is often a difficult task requiring much effort and even tears. Yet, when fruit is produced there is great rejoicing. In fact, those who sow and those who reap rejoice together (John 4:35-36) – along with those who are saved. To increase joy, we must be teachers of God's Word.

Day Five – Thursday**Luke 15:1-7**

Joy is found in repentance from sin and returning to the Lord. When a lost sheep is found, there is rejoicing from the shepherd, the community, and the Father in Heaven. To grow in joy, we must be willing to repent of our sins and remain true to the Lord.

Day Six – Friday**James 1:2-4**

Joy is found in enduring temptations, tests, and trials. While the difficulties are not pleasant, the results bring joy. With a proper perspective, they can make one “perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Thus, we must learn to focus on the result rather than the adversity. This was the attitude of Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) and it should be ours as well (Luke 6:23). To grow in joy, we must learn to endure difficulties.

Day Seven – Saturday**Acts 20:22-24**

Joy comes from knowing what awaits us at the end of the journey. Even though he knew the end was approaching, Paul wanted to finish his race with joy. When death came, Paul understood that he would receive a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Likewise, the Hebrews joyfully endured sacrifice because they knew how much better things would be in Heaven (Hebrews 10:32-34). To grow in joy, we must increase our hope of Heaven.