

**Luke 2:10 Good News of (great!) JOY**

*God intended joy to be the outcome of sending His Son into humanity. He is our great example that God's JOY sustains us through all of the circumstances of life.*

As you begin this study together, ask the Spirit of God to provide you insight about true joy. ☺

**GETTING STARTED** – What's the difference between "happiness" and "joy"? Complete the sentences and note the contrasts you discover. Think of examples which illustrate the difference between the two.

HAPPINESS "happens" when...

JOY is sourced in...

[Did you know that the word "happiness" comes from the Middle English and Norse *happ* meaning "chance, fortune," giving us words like "happenstance," "haphazard," "hapless," and "perhaps." QUOTE: "In the Indo-European language families, happiness has deep roots in the soil of chance." From Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History*. p.11. **So how does this inform the difference between happiness and joy?**

Does our relationship with Christ make us happy, or joyful, or both? Explore your thinking, discuss it.

**IN THE WORD**

Reflect on these statements about Biblical joy. Which of these statements resonates with you? Why?

John Piper - *Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as He causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world.*

Mother Teresa – *Joy is a net of love by which you catch souls.*

S.D. Gordon - *Joy is distinctly a Christian word and a Christian thing. It is the reverse of happiness. Happiness is the result of what happens of an agreeable sort. Joy has its springs deep down inside. And that spring never runs dry, no matter what happens.*

Tim Keller - *There is a joy available that the deepest grief cannot put out. No circumstance or person can take away the joy God gives.*

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Looking into the following Scriptures, WHERE does joy come from and WHAT ROLE can joy play in our lives

- \* Luke 15:1-10
- \* Romans 15:7-13
- \* Galatians 5:22-23
- \* James 1:2-4
- \* 1 Peter 1:3-9, 4:12-17
- \* Jude 1:20-25 (Who will be full of joy here? And why?)

**MY LIFE – OUR MISSION**

We discover that God's unique joy anchors our hearts, keeping them steady despite the ebb-and-flow of various circumstances. Peter teaches us that our joy shines brighter the more difficult our trials. When it shines, outsiders wonder the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15), and a unique opportunity for testimony.

Who in your world of acquaintances, colleagues, and friends, needs to see the Spirit's JOY in you? Is there someone whom you might help connect to this joy-producing Savior? Don't forget to pray for the Spirit's fullness in your life – no matter what circumstances you may be facing – so that joy both anchors your heart and provides a wonderful testimony.