



The Joy of John (and forerunners!) John 3:22-34

Sunday's Teaching...raised the question of when and where true joy is experienced in our world. Does it come from material success, relational harmony, political stability, from the success of a favorite athletic team? What does the experience and testimony of John (the baptizing forerunner) teach us about true joy?

This week's teaching truth landed here: ***True joy happens in our world when people respond to the call of the Bridegroom to become His bride.***

Let's get STARTED – warm up by discussing the following:

(1) *If you are married, or have been married, can you remember being "invited" or "called" by your partner into the marriage relationship? Were you excited? Did you have questions? Has your experience in being married fit with your expectations?*

(2) *In John 3, John the forerunner likens a coming into a relationship with Christ to that of the invitation of a bridegroom to someone to become His bride. Do you think this is a positive picture (or metaphor) for people today? What are the challenges to overcome if people think about a relationship with Jesus like this?*

Let's Explore in the WORD

The Scriptures offer a number of "pictures" for people to understand what it means to step into a faith-and-following relationship with Jesus Christ. For our study, **explore the following Scriptures to discover** a) what "picture" is, and b) what the "picture" communicates about our relationship with Jesus

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| Picture #1 | John 4:1-15 | what's the picture of the relationship? | what does it communicate? |
| Picture #2 | John 6:1-14, 32-40 | what's the picture of the relationship? | what does it communicate? |
| Picture #3 | John 9:1-18, 35-41 | what's the picture of the relationship? | what does it communicate? |
| Picture #4 | John 10:1-16, 22-30 | what's the picture of the relationship? | what does it communicate? |

Question for group members—which picture are you most drawn to? What does it mean personally?

Let's Prioritize APPLICATION

Finally...this week's message emphasized that people will not truly nor fully experience the joy that is available to them until they listen to the call of the Bridegroom and step by faith into an intimate relationship with Jesus. Do you know of anyone who is thirsty for fresh spiritual water? Someone who is hungry for something really nourishing? How about someone who is confused, perhaps even a bit blind? What about someone who needs a caring shepherd in his/her life.

Pray for them...and for an opportunity to share the One who can give true joy.