

## Spiritual Growth Questions for December 11, 2022

Joy, use a scale of 1 – 6 to rate how fully your life demonstrates the statements below (1 = does not demonstrate at all, 6 = demonstrates fully).

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have inner contentment even when things go wrong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Circumstances do not dictate my mood.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am excited about my sense of purpose for my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can be content with the money and possessions that I now have.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I display and share the joy Jesus has given with others.

1. How often do you joyfully acknowledge God's goodness in your life? Identify one good thing God has given to you or done for you in the past week. Take a moment to celebrate it with someone else.
2. **Read Luke 2:19-10, John 15:9-11, John 16:22-24 & 17:13.** What do you see as Jesus' desire for his followers concerning joy? What is the connection between joy and sorrow? How would you advise someone to ask for joy and walk in joy?
3. **Read Psalm 16:11, 66:18, Isaiah 59:2, 2 Cor. 5:16.** Christian joy is essentially the enjoyment of communion with God. In view of this, what do Ps. 66:18, Is. 59:2, 2 Cor.5:16 suggest concerning a common hindrance to joy? What then should be one of the first things we do when we are not experiencing the joy of the Lord?
4. **Read James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5** gives us God's perspective regarding trials of our faith that He either allows or sends into our lives. What is this perspective? How could we maintain joy in the midst of trials?
5. What is impeding your ability to choose a lifestyle of joy? How can you overcome this obstacle? What action step can you take this week to increase the presence of joy in your daily life?

**For further study: Read Romans 5:2, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Hebrews 10:34, 1 Peter 1:6.** Taking the long-range view of life helps us increase our joy. Study the following passages of Scripture, and then describe what it means to take the long-range view.

**Prayer:** Sovereign Lord, Break the hold of my independent sinful nature! I confess my need for you! I rely on you! May I walk in your presence and may your joy be fulfilled in my life! Help me to share this joy with others!

## Priorities of Advent

**The Priority of Joy: Walking in the Joy of Jesus**  
**Selected Scriptures December 11, 2022**  
**Pastor John Lloyd**

As we enter into this advent season, our hearts can be filled with concerns for so many things. Our world is filled with both wonderful and terrible events each day. The holidays add even more weight to all that we may be experiencing. Advent is a time to purposefully slow down and let our hearts appreciate and enjoy time with our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a time to both remember Jesus first coming but also to welcome His presence into our lives right now. We will purpose to reflect on Jesus and what the impact of his first advent. We will also look forward to what His presence means to us going forward both in this life and the next. We desire to make advent a priority this holiday season. Today, we will focus on the advent priority of joy. If we have Jesus, we can have joy. If we have His joy, may we share it with others!

Luke 2:9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people

John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 16:22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. 23 In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

G.K. Chesterton called this the gigantic secret of the Christian. The joy of Jesus in us.

**Big Idea:** If we have Jesus, we can walk in joy! May we share the joy of Jesus this advent season!  
Joy defined-

1. Jesus came to break the \_\_\_\_\_ of our \_\_\_\_\_.

Luke 2:9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Genesis 3:5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The Christmas story confronts us with our need for dependency! The Christmas story tells us that we need help. The Christmas story tells us that spiritual need and spiritual dependency are universal. Paul Tripp

Romans 6:6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 13 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (my independent and selfish kingdom to His selfless and joyful kingdom)

Luke 15:10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

**Getting our own way, living for ourselves is not the path to joy!  
Jesus was born to show us how-to live-in joy!  
If we have Jesus, we can walk in joy!**

II. Two choices: \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ my need for the grace/joy of Jesus.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (1 Tim.6:12 Paul calls it the good confession)

**Two ways of living:** You are either confessing that you were created by God to be dependent upon his wisdom, power and grace or you are believing that you have within yourself everything you need to live well on your own. Paul Tripp

Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Ps. 16:8-9

The Christian life begins not with high deeds and achievements but with the most simple and ordinary act of humble asking. Timothy Keller

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

**Confessing our need for Jesus is the avenue to receive His Joy.  
There is no limit to the progress a yielded heart can achieve!  
If we have Jesus, we can walk in joy!**

III. \_\_\_\_\_ is a gift we receive by surrendering control to Jesus.

Psalms 4:7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Ps. 30:5 Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalms 43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God to God my exceeding joy.

Ps. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. Psalms 126:5 Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.

Matt. 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you**, and that your joy may be full. 16:22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and **no one will take your joy from you**.

John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they **may have my joy fulfilled in themselves**. Jesus' prayer for us!

In John 17:13, Jesus promises his followers unshakeable joy because the full measure of Christ's own joy will be reproduced in us, a remarkable prospect. Timothy Keller (See Joy survey in Growth Questions)

2 Corinthians 7:4b In all our affliction, I am *overflowing* with joy.

Nehemiah 8:10b And do not be grieved, the joy of the Lord is your strength!

Pr 17:22 A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Happiness is a state of mind, joy is a mindset.

Happiness comes and goes while joy can be constant.

Happiness is dependent, joy is independent.

Happiness is conditional, joy is unconditional. Randy Frazee

Hebrews 12:2 Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (see GG long range joy)

**If we have Jesus, we can walk in joy!  
May we share His joy this Christmas!**