



SERIES: A Long Obedience

Group Guide Week 4 (for the week of March 28th, 2021)

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Most of us experience life from failure to failure, mishap to mishap, or crisis to crisis. It's understandable. Life, particularly modern life, has its fair share of difficulties. It's hard to feel like we are headed any place positive. But, what if we could? What if we could experience life as a beautifully unified story that proves just how much God loves us? In this series, we will be discussing God's masterful plan known as discipleship. The ability to stay consistently disciplined in order to experience more of who God is and who he's made us to be.

Big Idea: Joy is an essential benefit of godly obedience.

Scripture: Psalm 126:2-4, Psalm 107:2, Matthew 19:26, John 8:12, Romans 15:13, Hebrews 4:12

WEEK 4 RECAP:

If you missed Sunday's message here is WEEK FOUR RECAP:

In our final conversation on these powerful songs, we tackle the most challenging of them all, the Song of Joy. In 2021, while our world's systems and securities seem to be reducing themselves rubble, how do we have joy? Is the Bible just that unaware of the fallout of hardship? Or, does it know something we do not. Could an investigation into the past give us what we need to hope in the future again? Yes, yes it can.

- **We've been taught to believe that joy is the absence of pain.**
- **What once destroyed the pain eventually only dulls the pain.**
- **What only dulls the pain eventually destroys us.**

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. How do you define Joy?
2. What are some things that bring Joy into your life?
3. Have you ever heard someone's story and thought "there is no way you've experienced such pain and still live life with Happiness and Joy"? Can you share examples with the group?
4. Please read Matthew 19:26
 - a. What are some areas of your life that seem "impossible" right now? (relationships, family ties, work..etc)
5. Please read Psalm 126:2-4
 - a. What are some things you noticed in this passage that people did to experience Joy in hard times?
6. Ben stated that "we are the carriers of God's Resume" as he read Psalm 107:2
 - a. If we're honest, is what you are talking about actually worth talking about?
 - b. If we're honest, is what you're posting, speaking on behalf of God and defining his desire for Joy in our lives?
 - c. What are some things in our current state of the world that try to steal your joy?
7. If joy is obtained by asking for it, what are some ways we can pray for each other to find joy?

TAKE AWAY & ACTION ITEMS:

- **HOW DO YOU GAIN JOY? You don't earn it, you ask for it.**
- **Pray for Joy- for yourself, your family, your community, and this world.**
- **A prayer of Joy: Romans 15:13**
- **It's time for the church to bring Joy, not division, and live as "One Happy People"**

RESOURCES used on Sunday:

- God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God's Word. We can't get away from it—no matter what." **Hebrews 4:12**
- Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." **John 8:12**
- Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." **Matthew 19:26**
- It seemed like a dream, too good to be true, when GOD returned Zion's exiles. We laughed, we sang, we couldn't believe our good fortune. We were the talk of the nations— "GOD was wonderful to them!" GOD was wonderful to us; we are one happy people.^{4+PSA} And now, GOD, do it again— bring rains to our drought-stricken lives So those who planted their crops in despair will shout hurrahs at the harvest, So those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing. **Psalms 126:2-4**
- Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies. **Psalms 107:2**
- I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13**
- **A common but futile strategy for achieving joy is trying to eliminate things that hurt: get rid of pain by numbing the nerve ends, get rid of insecurity by eliminating risks, get rid of disappointment by depersonalizing your relationships. And then try to lighten the boredom of such a life by buying joy in the form of vacations and entertainment.He continues by pointing out the alternative, and he's exactly right about this:One of the most interesting and remarkable things Christians learn is that laughter does not exclude weeping. Christian joy is not an escape from sorrow. Pain and hardship still come, but they are unable to drive out the happiness of the redeemed. - Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience***