



## THINK IT THROUGH

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Why is JOY so important for our Christian witness?

Discuss the following comment by Martin Lloyd Jones in his book *Spiritual Depression* –

*“Christian people too often seem to be perpetually in the doldrums and too often give the appearance of unhappiness and of lack of freedom and absence of joy. There is no question at all that this is the main reason why large numbers of people have ceased to be interested in Christianity.”*



## TAKE ACTION

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Choose one of the following passages for further prayerful reflection:

- 1 Peter 1:3-9 (the JOY awaiting us in heaven)
- Jeremiah 17:7-8 (confidence in the Lord which is the root of firm JOY)
- Psalm 32:3-5 (the JOY of confessing sin and receiving God’s forgiveness)



## PRAY IT THROUGH

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As Christians we should be conscious of JOY flowing through the soul.

If you are conscious that you lack this deep, abiding JOY:

- Confess it to God.
- Confess any disobedience that may be blocking the Spirit’s work in your life.
- Ask God to reveal any others contributing factors.
- Pray the words of Psalm 51:12, “Restore to me the JOY of your salvation...”
- Seek to abide in Him and trust him and obey him at all times.

# 9 A DAY BECOMING LIKE JESUS

SMALL GROUPS SHEET  
WEEK BEGINNING 26 JANUARY 2014

## 3. JOY

Oakhall  
CHURCH WELCOMES YOU



## FOR STARTERS

It has been said that someone who is not yet a Christian can experience pleasure and happiness but he or she cannot experience supernatural JOY. What is the difference?

Consider the following passages and how the Bible assumes that JOY is the essence of the Christian life:

- Psalm 16:7-11
- Isaiah 12:1-3
- Romans 14:17-18
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Our culture treats religion as a crutch or as a tiresome dutiful obedience to random rules. How would describe to someone the Christian basis of your JOY?

**Read: Galatians 5:19-23 and John 15:1-17**



## BACKGROUND

In John 15 Jesus is walking toward the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed. In many ways there was reason for despair for him and for the disciples. Instead Jesus speaks about JOY and how it is possible.



## INVESTIGATE

What does the vine image (v5) communicate about the essence of the Christian life?

How does this help us understand the fruit of the Spirit in our lives?

What is Jesus longing for in verse 11? (See also John 17:13)

What is the foundation of this JOY (John 15:4-5, 10-11)?

What is the implied link between love (the first of the Spirit's fruit) and JOY (v12)?



## THINK IT THROUGH

If we are honest, most of us have to admit that life is often anything but joyful.  
- How does John 15 help us explain any lack of joy in our lives?

- The believers in Galatia seem to have lost their joy. See Gal 4:15.  
What clues do we get from Paul's letter as to the reason why (for them.. and us)?

- Galatians 3:1-3 (contrast Romans 15:13)
- Galatians 2:20-21
- Galatians 3:1-3; 5:1

What other factors may cause us to lose our joy?



## INVESTIGATE

What do we learn from the following passages about JOY in times of suffering?

- Habakkuk 3:17-19
- Acts 16:22-34
- Philippians 1:15-18, 21

Nehemiah 8:10 says that, "...the JOY of Lord is your strength."

- What is the connection between JOY and strength?



## THINK IT THROUGH

Two things are clear from the New Testament:

- True JOY is something only the Holy Spirit can produce in us (Gal 5:22).
- We are commanded to rejoice (Philippians 4:4).

How do we explain the fact that JOY is both a Christian privilege and a Christian duty?

Philippians 4:4 implies there is always a reason to rejoice. Why is this true?