

Icebreaker

What is the most joyful thing you will do this summer?

Read John 15:1-12 and discuss:

1. In John 15:1-11, Jesus makes these statements so that the disciples can have joy and “your joy may be complete.” What do you see in John 15:1-10 that will help bring joy and bring joy to completion even today?
2. If we don’t abide in Christ, we will wither (verse 6). Even those who bear fruit are pruned to bear more fruit (verse 2). Can you think of a time when you have been pruned and did it help you to grow?
3. Was there a time when you experienced joy in a difficult circumstance?
4. What impedes your ability to choose joy? How can you overcome this obstacle with God’s help?
5. Where do you need to find joy from God? Finish the sentence: “God, help me find joy in _____.”
6. What are some things in the story line of the Bible that bring you joy? How do they connect with joy in your life?
7. We’re concluding our True North series this week and finishing our study of Christian virtues. Of these virtues, what is one that is fruitful in your life and one that is withering or lacking: humility, hope, faithfulness, self-control, gentleness, patience, compassion, peace, love, joy?

Prayer

As you close in prayer, remember requests from our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Wanda Baker and Barbara Sloop.
- > Prayers of comfort for the McDonald family in the death of Mark’s grandmother.

Reminders for your group:

- > **This is our last week until fall.**
- > **Please consider doing a group social or a group service project like Habitat for Humanity, volunteering at VBS, or Str8up Ministry this summer!**

Thanks and God bless you! Jerry, Sally, and Scott.

Leader’s Notes:

We hope you have had a great spring session with your home group and that the study of Christian virtues with Jesus Christ as our True North has been “fruitful” for you. As we reflect on these virtues, a couple of things stand out. They are almost all related to one another. Peace goes with self-control; love goes with compassion; and gentleness, patience, and humility work together. Also, we have learned that these virtues take time to grow. We do not go from a person of impatience to patience just by a simple prayer one day. We must persevere with Christ to cultivate these virtues – keeping our focus on Jesus Christ, because he is our True North. When we are walking with Christ, we are more likely to experience his deep joy.

[Question 1] Look at the first 10 verses of John 15 which lead to Jesus saying in verse 11 that his disciples will have joy. Much of John 15 is Jesus saying to “abide” or “remain” in him. If we abide in Jesus, despite all else, we should experience joy.

[Question 2] Abiding in Christ is great, and those who don’t will wither. Even those who do abide in Christ will be pruned. Branches that don’t produce fruit need to be cut off. Fruitful branches are cut back to promote growth. Has God’s pruning helped you to grow?

[Question 3] We can all have happiness. But Paul and others say we can have joy by abiding in Christ. Have you had joy in times of trouble? When you depend on God in tough times you see how he is using that to grow you. When we are weak, God is strong. God only corrects us and prunes us to help us.

[Question 4] Is there something stopping your joy? Some examples might be unforgiveness or bitterness, or a hidden sin you need to confess and get rid of. If you sense something is holding you back from God’s joy, be bold to correct it with God’s help.

[Question 5] Allow your group members to share openly here. Encourage transparent sharing as your group has gotten to know each other better over these many meeting times.

[Question 6] Some examples from the Bible that bring you joy might be: the birth of Jesus; the story of Ruth and Naomi; Sarah getting pregnant when she was old; etc. Some ways they may connect with joy in our lives might be: experiencing similar joyful events like a birth; relationships; and unexpected surprises or gifts from God.

[Question 7] Take a moment to reflect on the virtues. By each person focusing on one or two, you will be able to remember a little about how you could practice each virtue we have studied and where you still need to grow.