

Joy

Monday, 7/5/10 – Read Psalm 65:8-13 and Galatians 5:22

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: JOY is one of the fruits of the Spirit. God’s Spirit is always moving us toward joy! That doesn’t mean, though, that we won’t also have times of sadness or feeling despondent. But there will be more joy! ... Look over your life. Where do you notice yourself feeling joyful? In Psalm 65 God’s good creation is a source of joy -- the vast expanse of ocean, the majesty of mountains, the startling beauty and shapes of flowers, the energy and vitality of animals? Write down the ways that God’s world awakens joy in you.

Tuesday, 7/6/10 – Read Luke 2:8-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The angels announced Jesus’ birth as “a great joy for all the people.” For you, how was Jesus’ birth (the coming of Christ into the world, the birth of a savior) -- for you how is this a great joy? Be as specific as you can. How is Jesus a great joy for you?

Wednesday, 7/7/10 – Read Matthew 13:44

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Too many people think of faith (or church or God) as a dreadful and dreary thing -- full of obligations, guilt, and shame. Look carefully at Jesus’ little

parable in Matthew 13:44. A man finds a treasure and FOR JOY sells all that he has so he can buy the treasure. ... What in your life awakens that kind of joy? Is your relationship with God a joyful thing?

Thursday, 7/8/10 – Read Luke 15:1-7

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: When Jesus speaks of joy, he’s not only talking about the kinds of things that give us a momentary surge of good feeling. He’s talking about our participating in the joy of the whole universe, the whole cosmos -- the joy of heaven, the joy of the angels! ... When God finds any one of us, there is joy. This is the kind of joy that the Spirit of God is producing in us. ... Close your eyes for a moment. Picture JOY IN HEAVEN. What color is it? What sound does it make. How does it make you feel?

Friday, 7/9/10 – Read John 15:9-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus whole point was he wanted to share his Divine Joy -- that his joy would be in us. This is not a momentary titillation but a deep, abiding delight in the goodness of relationship with God in Christ. Jesus wants his joy to be in you! ... Have you ever had an experience when it seemed like you were feeling a joy that was bigger than you? Describe the experience. What was it like for you?

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Saturday, 7/10/11 – Read **John 16:20-24**
and **Hebrews 12:1-2**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus never promises that we will feel joyful all the time. He does not promise that there won't also be difficult and painful times. But he does promise that the joy will be there, even though sometimes we first have to go through the pain. (Jesus himself encountered this, as Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us.) ... When we're in pain, it's hard to remember that God is leading us toward joy. But remembering can help. Have you ever felt that God was leading you through a painful time toward a greater joy? If you have, describe the experience.

Sunday, 7/11/10 – Read **Romans 15:13**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Make this your prayer today -- that God will fill you with all God's joy as you trust God. (Remember that "believing" here means *confidently trusting*.) As you pray today, open your heart to God's Spirit, trusting that it is God's purpose to awaken in you a deeper and abiding joy.

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.