



HOME GROUP MATERIAL  
REJOICE

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## I. Introductory Discussion Questions

1. What stood out for you most about the "Rejoice" Sermon on Sunday?
2. Read the three parables in Luke 15. What stands out for you about the message Jesus is conveying in this passage?

### **Luke 15 vs 1-32:**

"One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started grumbling, "This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!" So Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them---what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbors together and say to them, 'I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent.

"Or suppose a woman who has ten silver coins loses one of them---what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps her house, and looks carefully everywhere until she finds it. When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, and says to them, 'I am so happy I found the coin I lost. Let us celebrate!' In the same way, I tell you, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents."

Jesus went on to say, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, 'Father, give me my share of the property now.' So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. At last he came to his senses and said, 'All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.' ' So he got up and started back to his father. "He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants. 'Hurry!' he said.

'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feasting began. "In the meantime the older son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him, 'What's going on?' 'Your brother has come back home,' the servant answered, 'and your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.' The older brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. But he spoke back to his father, 'Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!' 'My son,' the father answered, 'you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' "

3. How would you define spiritual "lostness"?
4. Why do you think it is significant that all these parables end in celebrations? What does this tell you about the heart of God?
5. God is a God of celebration and joy Who intends for those who follow Him to possess His joy and to reflect it to others. How joyful would you say your life is right now?
6. How would you define joy?
7. Read and reflect on the following Scriptures. What do they tell you about joy as part of the Christian experience?

- **Psalm 16 vs 11:**

"You will make Me know the way of life; in Your presence *is* fullness of joy. At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore."

- **John 15 vs 8-12:**

"My Father's glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples. I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

- **John 17:12-13:**

"While I was with them, I kept them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me. I protected them, and not one of them was lost, except the man who was bound to be lost---so

that the scripture might come true. And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness.”

8. What are some of the things in your life about which you do rejoice (or should be rejoicing)?
9. What are the things that steal your joy or prevent you from rejoicing?
10. Do you think joy, as Christ gives it, is conditional or based on our situations or do you think it is something that transcends our current situations? Why?

*Read and reflect on the following Scriptures about people who still rejoiced in difficult situations:*

- **Philippians 4 vs 4-8:**

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, Rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, my brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are right, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.”

- **Acts 16 vs 25:**

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.”

- **Job 1 vs 20-21:**

“And Job arose, and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshiped. And he said, I came naked out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

## **ii. We can rejoice in what God has done and is doing**

1. We all too often easily forget about or become complacent about the things God has done for us. Share with the group one of the most significant or amazing things God

has done in your life in the last while. When was the last time you really experienced God moving in your life?

2. Not only has God done amazing things in our lives in the past, but He has promised each of us that He has incredible plans for us for our futures. (Read Jeremiah 29 vs 11).

*Give each person in your group a piece of paper and a pen and let them reflect for a few moments on where they feel God is leading them. What is it that He wants to do in their lives? Ask people to think specifically about what God is saying the next step is for them in their spiritual journey or to ask God to give them clarity about His general plan for their lives right now. Let everyone share what they feel God is saying.*

### **III. We can rejoice in where we have come from and where we are going**

1. The parables in Luke 15 reveal that God is a seeking God – He passionately, purposefully and patiently seeks and pursues us and our love. He doesn't stop seeking us when we are saved. He continually seeks a closer relationship with us and seeks to reveal more of Himself to us. God is seeking you, but are you seeking Him?
2. What does it practically mean to seek God?
3. What is one thing you can practically do this week to seek God more?
4. Read and reflect on the following Scripture.

#### ***Philippians 1 vs 6:***

*“And so I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.”*

Why is it significant that God is continually seeking and pursuing us and transforming us more and more into His likeness, i.e. that Christianity is more like a journey with God than simply being saved and arriving at a destination?

### **IV. We can rejoice in Who God is always will be**

1. What is the character trait of God that means the most to you right now?
2. Why do you think it is significant that God is the same “yesterday, today and forever?” (Hebrews 13 vs 8)

3. What do you think it means to rejoice *in the Lord* (as opposed to rejoicing in general)? (Philippians 4 vs 4)
4. Do you think that the Christians you know generally have a different attitude towards life because of the hope we have in the certainty of Who God is? If not, why do you think this is?

## **VI. Call to action**

### Discussion:

1. What will we do with what we have discovered in this session?
2. How will we hold each other accountable to this?

#### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:**

- What is the one thing you can do practically to cultivate an attitude of joy this week?
- What actions can you take to remove those things in your life that hinder your joy / celebration?
- Encourage each person to write down five things each day about which they can rejoice or celebrate. Ask them to bring these lists next week and to share some of their insights from this exercise.