

Small Group Notes based on The Joy of the Lord: 1.

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- This series is based on **Nehemiah 8:10**.
 - What do you think about the relationship between joy and strength?
- The goals for this series:
 - 1: Permission. For you to have permission to seek fullness of joy as part of your calling in Christ.
 - 2: Wisdom. For you to know what this joy is and not be pulled in by counterfeits. Have you seen **Proverbs 14:13** in people?
 - What are some forms of counterfeit joy? Discuss the following:
 - Have you known people who laugh a lot but who are very sad underneath?
 - How about sin that seems joyful at first but ends in pain? (The devil's trap.)
 - 3: Access. For you to actually get it. What would it mean for your life if you had "the joy of the Lord?"
 - 4: Strength. For you, me, us, the Body of Christ. Imagine what this would do for marriages...for families...for witnessing...for churches...for business meetings...
- Let's read a couple "joy" scriptures:
 - **John 15:11**
 - What were Jesus' goals for his teachings in John 15?
 - What were his teachings? This is right after the vine and branches.
 - Put in context **John 15:9-12**. Being in a securely loving environment brings joy. That's a good place to be.
 - **Galatians 5:22**
 - What is the second fruit of the Spirit? JOY!
 - Did you see that before? It's the second one! Joy is a major part of the overflow of the Spirit in believers. How seriously should we take this?
- But what about **James 4:9**?
 - So what's going on? Put in context **James 4:7-10**.
 - James is talking to double-minded sinners.
 - This is counterfeit joy. The joy of the world, not the joy of the Lord. (see verse 4)
 - What is the final goal for these verses? (see verse 10)
- Discuss the following:
 - The people in Nehemiah were weeping. James is calling people to weep in the same way.
 - This is part of repentance – to see what you are missing and to grieve over it.
 - The people in Nehemiah's day saw what they as a nation and as individuals had lost and they were heart sick over it.
 - This is the same as the prodigal coming to his senses.
 - When you understand what you have lost by pushing God away your heart will ache. Does everyone realize what they have lost by pushing God away? Does anyone? Do you?
 - On the other side of this grieving God Himself will be the one to lift you up.
 - This joy of the Lord isn't a joy that masks your problems and just distracts you.
 - It is a joy that comes from facing and overcoming all that is wrong in your life and in your heart, by the grace of God. That is a joy that can't be shaken.
- Final scripture of the day **Romans 15:13**. Make this part of the closing prayer.
- Pray for each other before you finish up!