

## Experiencing The Fullness of Joy

God is a happy God, and because we are made in his image, our desire for happiness is the very thing that God made us to desire and pursue. The problem is that we have bought into a lie by substituting our pursuit of real happiness, for the pursuit of momentary happiness. We have swapped the real for the superficial. God desires us to find our happiness in him and not in our circumstances, over which we have very little control. In order to live the “good life”, we need to live the God life.

### Today's Text: John 15:8-13

#### **1. There is fullness of joy to be had in this life**

Jesus calls us to a life of joy, which includes the good times, as well as the times of suffering. The way that this is possible is for HIS joy to be lived IN US. It is not joy that we have to fabricate or chase after through circumstantial experiences.

#### **2. There is fullness of joy to be had by remaining in Christ**

Jesus himself experiences joy because of his Father's love for him and as we abide in him, we get to experience that fullness of joy for ourselves. Because he consistently and permanently experiences God's love himself, it means that we can too. We have no other way of maintaining real joy outside of the joy that Christ gives to us. It's the only option but the sure option, available to all who know him.

#### **3. The fullness of this joy is experienced in loving one another**

When we experience the joy found in Christ, it glorifies God. Our joy makes God happy. And giving God glory fills us with joy. Our joy is also connected to us bearing fruit. When we bear fruit, this is evidence that we actually are the Lord's followers. The fruit he is talking about here is love. If we have love for one another, it means that we are obeying Christ's commandment. And when we do that, we experience his joy in us. Loving other believers, which almost always means serving them at the cost of our inconvenience, brings us great joy. We often think that putting ourselves first will keep us happy, but it's the other way around. Sacrificially loving others glorifies God and then fills us with joy.

#### **4. How to have the good life by living the God life**

There are 3 ways in which we can live the God life:

1. By reprogramming our thinking – through both God's word and accountable community.
2. Reforming our “doing” – changing our posture towards our community of faith, and living a life of love.
3. Reconnect our living – to Jesus, the true ‘vine’.



HAPPINESS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

## Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do we personally buy into the lie of temporary and circumstantial happiness? Be specific about one thing you chase after, believing it will make you happy.
2. What does it mean for us to abide in Christ?
3. Why do you think our love for other believers is an evidence of us being Jesus' true disciples?
4. Why do you think that genuinely loving other believers is hard work, and almost always a sacrifice?
5. When last did you put aside your own desires to serve the need of another believer? In what way did you experience joy, even though it cost you?
6. Why is it necessary to change our thinking, if we are going to find our happiness in God, and why is reading the Bible a vital tool in that process?
7. What one specific thing has God highlighted in your life that he wants you to deal with considering this week's message?

