



Reclaiming Your
JOY

A Bible Study on Conquering Your Joy-Stealers

LORRAINE HILL



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LEADER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

I am so excited that you have decided to lead the *Reclaiming Your Joy* Bible study. The heart of this study is that people will experience the amazing joy that Jesus readily offers us – not a partial joy dependent on circumstances and people, but a full joy based in Him and in His promises.

By choosing to lead this study and help lead Christians deeper into God's Word, you will be given the opportunity by God to change people's lives and impact them for eternity. I can't wait to hear how God's Word grows and changes your group. Thank you for your willingness to be used of God in this way!

This Leader's Guide will equip you to lead this study by providing administrative information and general instructions. These are only suggestions, however, because each of you has the magnificent Holy Spirit in you, and He can equip you far better than I in leading this study. Even more importantly, the Holy Spirit knows the participants of your group and knows their needs so I strongly urge you to follow His guiding hand.

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE STUDY

The Reclaiming Your Joy study is an eight week in-depth Bible study. Each week contains daily homework for five days. The estimated time to complete the homework is about thirty minutes. The homework includes a variety of questions, like fill-in-the-blank statements, multiple choice questions, yes/no questions, and matching questions. This allows the participant to take the material and personally apply it to his or her life. There are also Challenge questions, which allow a participant to go deeper into the Word.

NOTES

PREPARING FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY CONTINUED

- Create nametags for individual participants and keep several extras available. In the early stages, nametags are helpful in assisting participants to bond with each other and feel comfortable sharing personal information.
- Have a leadership meeting before you start the study. Go over leadership roles, establish expectations, and discuss the responsibilities of Small Group leaders (see *Facilitating Small Groups* section below).
- Depending on your group, you may want to have a mid-semester and end of year fellowship. This allows all the participants to grow deeper in their relationships with each other. It is also nice to have food on the first night, to kick off the study.

NOTES

CREATING SMALL GROUPS

Small group discussion is an important part of this study because it allows individuals the opportunity to share what God has revealed to them through the study and ask questions of other believers to increase in their own understanding. It also creates community and builds fellowship, which is important within the body of Christ. Participants can listen, encourage and pray for one another. It is amazing how God often places people who need each other in the same groups so that they can minister to one another during the study.

The most effective size for small groups seems to be around 10-12 people. A group of more than twelve people tends to not allow each individual the opportunity to share.

If you have any questions or need help organizing your study, please visit the Leaders Forum at CaptivatedbyGod.org. It will help answer your questions, provide you unique suggestions, and allow you to share your experience with other leaders.

NOTES

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTORY WEEK – ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

- Tell the group about yourself.
- Share one interesting fact about yourself.
- What prompted you to take this study?
- What do you hope to get out of this study?

WEEK 1 – OUR GREAT CALLING

- Day 1 - Who are three of the most joyful people that you know? What makes these people so joyful?
- Day 2 – Have you sought fulfillment through money and possessions? As you have achieved your financial goals, have you become content or created new financial goals?
- Day 3 – Is anything currently hindering you in your relationship with God?
- Day 4 – Read Psalm 86:11-12. List anything that is currently dividing your affection for the Lord. Do you need to ask the Lord for an undivided heart to love him?
- Day 5 – Can you think of some ways that Satan seeks to steal your joy?

WEEK 2 – ABIDING JOY

- Day 1 - What are three of your greatest challenges for living a *daily* joyous life?
- Day 2 – Share an instance in which obedience to God resulted in great joy.
- Day 3 – What is legalism? Can you think of any legalistic rules that plague the church today?
- Day 4 – What challenges you most in your walk of liberty (freedom in Christ)?
- Day 5 – Read Proverbs 27:5-6. Do your close friends usually confront you when you sin or just sympathize with you? Explain.

WEEK 3 – WEIGHED DOWN BY WORRY

- Day 1 – How do your worries hinder you *spiritually* in your Christian walk?
- Day 2 – Do you ever say you trust the Lord, but then think of a second option just in case the Lord does not come through? Is this really trusting in the Lord?
- Day 3 – If you were in the boat, would you have asked Jesus this? Why or why not?
- Day 4 – Why is it important that we not only pray, but also redirect our worrisome thoughts?
- Day 5 – Based on the above questions, do you think you need to slow down the pace of your life? If so, what changes do you need to make?

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

WEEK 4 – WEARIED BY PEOPLE

- Day 1 – Why does the Lord stress the need for us to love others (Romans 13:8-10)?
- Day 2 – How can personality differences cause conflicts within the body of Christ?
- Day 3 – Has practicality ever inhibited you from expressing compassion to someone? Explain.
- Day 4 – Read Matthew 5:44. How can praying for our enemies or for a difficult person help?
- Day 5 – How can seeking to please people hinder our Christian walk?

WEEK 5 – DOWNCAST BY DISAPPOINTMENT

- Day 1 – What are some of the disappointments that you have faced in your life?
- Day 2 – Exercise with God's promises contrasted with Satan's secret whispers.
- Day 3 – How can maintaining an eternal perspective help us to deal with our disappointments?
- Day 4 – Read Psalm 84:11. Will God withhold something that is in our best interest? How does this encourage you?
- Day 5 – How can focusing on the Lord keep you from becoming discouraged and disillusioned?

WEEK 6 – IMPRISONED BY UNFORGIVENESS

- Day 1 – Read Matthew 18:21-22. What do you learn about forgiveness?
- Day 2 – What does it mean to forgive?
- Day 3 – Have you ever felt betrayed by a family member or a friend? Explain.
- Day 4 – What should we take captive (2 Corinthians 10:5)? Why?
- Day 5 – How does it encourage you to know that the Lord has seen every hurt and offense ever committed against you?

WEEK 7 – TROUBLED BY TRIALS

- Day 1 – Does righteous behavior always receive a positive *earthly* reward? Explain.
- Day 2 – Read Acts 16:25-34. How does Paul and Silas's behavior impact those around them?
- Day 3 – Why does Jesus allow Satan to sift Peter? Why does Jesus allow Satan to sift us?
- Day 4 – Exercise with personalized scale.
- Day 5 – Read Acts 12:1-11. Compare what happens to James to what happens to Peter. How do you witness God's sovereignty in this situation?

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

WEEK 8 – ABOUNDING IN THANKFULNESS

- Day 1 – Have you ever had to lose a blessing in order to realize its value and become thankful for it? Explain.
- Day 2 – As the people grumble to Moses and Aaron, against whom are they really grumbling (Exodus 16:8b)?
- Day 3 – What are some creative ways in which Christians can curb their complaining?
- Day 4 – Why do you think it is important to not forget what the Lord has done for us? Also see Job 8:12-13.
- Day 5 – Take a few moments to reflect on how your salvation has changed your life. How can reflecting on your salvation enable you to remain more thankful and joyous?

A FINAL NOTE

Thank you again for your willingness to lead this study. Because of your faithfulness, many people will be able to go deeper in the Word and their relationship with God. What a privilege it is to study God's glorious Word with you and other believers. I pray that God will use you to expand His kingdom and grow his people. I can't wait to hear your stories! And if I don't hear them in this lifetime, then we have all of eternity to catch up!

Lorraine Hill