

Springs of Joy

John 15:11

In many passages in the Bible, we are admonished to be joyful. This might seem paradoxical given that we live in a world that is full of evil. Clearly, the joy talked about in the Scripture cannot derive from natural circumstances. These change from time to time; from good to bad and vice versa. True / lasting joy has to come from something deeper.

Discussion questions

- 1) What naturally comes to your mind when you think of joy?
- 2) Read Phil. 4:4. Paul wrote this passage from prison. How unnatural is that? Discuss typical responses to situations like the one Paul found himself in when he wrote the letter.
- 3) In Romans 5:1-11 (preferably from the NLT), Paul gives us three reasons to rejoice. Discuss what each of the following statements mean and why they should provoke joy:
 - (a) We are reconciled to God (vs 6-11).
 - (b) Our suffering has purpose (vs 3-5). See also 2 Cor. 12:7-10 (read from ESV or NIV and then from the Message translation)
 - (c) We will share in God's glory (1-2). See also 1 John 3:1-2.
- 4) Someone said: "Our joy should not depend on what happens **to** us but on what happens **in** us". Discuss this means in light of #3 above.
- 5) How can we practicalize the admonition to be joyful?