



Rediscovering the Joy of Christmas

Luke 2:8-18

PREPARE

Self-preparation: Sit in silence and allow your mind to quiet down. Reflect on what is bringing you joy in life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Group preparation: Open your time as a group with silent prayers of thankfulness. Have a group member break the silence with an opening prayer.

OPEN

How would you explain the difference between *happiness* and *joy*?

What is bringing you joy in this season of life?

DISCUSS

What did you learn about happiness from the sermon? List as many things as the group can recall:

Read Luke 2:8-18

SHEPHERD NOTE: Being a shepherd was not always a favorable or desired job/vocation. Life was hard, trust of shepherds was rare, and they were viewed as unclean which was a big deal in society. Basically, they were people of disreputable occupation and character. Shepherds were not "happy" people.

Do you find it ironic or appropriate the angel appeared to shepherds? Explain.

What was their message to them?

Think about your own journey of life and the season in which you are currently living. Read, reflect, and discuss the dichotomy of happiness and joy as the Spirit impresses thoughts and words on your heart from the list below:

- Happiness is a sense of well-being based on how you feel; but JOY is a state of well-being based on how God feels about you.
- Happiness comes from your immediate circumstances; but JOY comes from knowing your eternal condition.
- Happiness is often competitive or comparative; but JOY is often communal. It is a good we often feel in greater measure when we are with others. It connects us with others.
- Happiness is a relentless pursuit you're never done with; but JOY is more like an in-breaking gift that stays with you, filling you with wonder and gratitude.

Do one or more of the points above challenge you? Explain.

May you, like the shepherds, find cause for GREAT JOY in this Advent season.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NEXT STEPS

- Read the Bible passage in this study each day this week.
- How are you experiencing joy from the Lord in your life?
- Pay attention to your own spirit and soul this week. Report back to the group what was different (if anything) as you focus and experience joy.