

Rejoice: Experiencing Joy as a Couple Part 1

Philippians 2:1-16

Couples Project . October 1, 2019

Part I - *To be completed separately before the message. You can begin at your leisure, but time will be given at the beginning of the meeting to complete this first portion.*

1. Who are a few of the most joyful people / couples you know? Jot down some traits you feel like they all have in common.
2. As you consider your own marriage, where do you believe growth in experiencing joy is most needed? Write down two or three answers if you have them. Include the one or two things you feel are standing in your way of joy.
3. On a scale from 1-10, write the number that best represents your outlook on your marriage into the future. 1 = very pessimistic 10 = very optimistic. Explain your answer.

Sermon Notes - *For your reference as you review the message.*

1. *We Remember God's Works (vv1-2)*
2. *We Serve Each Other (vv3-4)*
3. *We Follow Christ's Example (vv5-11)*
4. *We Live Differently (vv12-16)*

"So many couples get obsessed with how their spouses are failing and how much they have to put up with. We should have the concern of a physician, wanting them to get well, rather than the passion of a prosecuting attorney, wanting to make them pay." (Gary Thomas)

"Here was a man with towering charisma, running over with life. Health and healing, loaves and fishes, all abounded in his presence. So compelling did people find him that crowds thronged round him...Yes, he was a man who felt a world of pain, yet who abounded with joy." (Michael Reeves)

"The others-embracing, others-seeing mind-set of Christ is so unnatural to our self-preserving instincts. Yet when God's grace grasps us deeply, it begins to develop into our deepest, strongest desire. We begin to care for all our brothers and sisters in Christ with the same passionate intensity that we so automatically and easily lavish on our own comforts and concerns." (Dennis Johnson)

Part II a - *To be completed separately after the message. Time will be given following the message to complete this second portion.*

1. What are two or three things you heard in the message that stand out to you as applicable to your marriage as it is currently?
2. In which personal areas do you believe God most wants to grow you and your faith toward joy?
3. What could change right now in how you are living to further distinguish your marriage from the world? What change might take longer but would have an even greater impact?

Part II b - *These questions will help foster sharing in groups following Part II a. Listen to and encourage one another.*

1. Share your answers from Question 1 Part II, as appropriate.
2. What are some Scriptures that have helped you fight for joy? Share with one another.
3. Share one story of God's activity in your lives. A personal or marital story.
4. What is one area you'd like prayer in for your marriage? Get as personal as you're comfortable doing.

Part III - *To be completed together within one week after the meeting. Take time where you can talk in an uninterrupted and unhurried way to complete the third portion of this project. Feel free to use this worksheet however you wish. If you want a plan, consider the one below:*

1. Pray. Ask God for his help to keep your conversation fruitful and redemptive. If, at any point during the conversation you feel conflict brewing, stop and remember together that Christ means to be the center of the marriage and the conversation, not a conflict.
2. Take the time to share your answers from Question 2 in Part I. Realize that God may have spoken to each of you in different ways, seeking to address different things. Don't correct or critique. Simply inform and share God's activity during the message.
3. Review your answers to Questions 3 from Part I. Don't negotiate or debate the numbers. Seek to learn where your spouse is coming from and what might be needed to increase the number.
4. Review your answers to Question 3 from Part II. Listen to one another share why they've answered in the way they have. Discuss potential first steps in moving toward that application.
5. Pray. Ask God to strengthen you with the might of his power as he fills your marriage with his Spirit. Ask him to forgive you for your contribution to any challenges and thank him for bringing you together as a couple. Pray that God would provide all of the help you need.