



COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Sermon Discussion Questions

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Series: God of Hope

Week 1: "Fill You with All Joy and Peace"

1. ICE BREAKER: During the message, we looked at the "emojis" for joy and peace. Share which emoji you use the most often while texting! (*Hint: open your texting keyboard to see which ones populate first!*)
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Romans 15:13:

¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We will read this verse every week of the series. As you read it today again, does one word stick out in particular to you as important?

3. In this message, we looked specifically at the part of Romans 15:13 that says "fill you with all joy and peace." We began by redefining Christian joy and peace, as compared to how we often use these words in our every day language.

As a group, first define joy and peace as they are most often used in our culture and in the world. Then, define Christian joy and peace. Do you see any similarities? What are some of the major differences?

4. First, it's important to understand that Joy and peace are fruit of the Spirit. Read Galatians 5:22-23, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*

Why is the understanding that joy and peace are Fruit of the Spirit an important one? Have you ever tried to create your own joy and peace in your life? How did that go?

5. Read Jesus' words in John 15:5, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* Jesus reminds us here that we can't produce fruit on our own; instead, our responsibility is to stay connected to Him.

Share with your group some practical ways that you stay connected to Jesus on a daily basis. How can you tell whether you are striving on your own power, or relying on Jesus to bear fruit?

6. Secondly, we need to remember that joy and peace are not circumstantial. In other words, our lives don't have to be in perfect condition in order for us to experience joy and peace. Look up and read these verses: James 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:4.

Discuss as a group the difference between where the world tells us joy comes from, and where Scripture says it is found. Have you ever experienced the joy and peace of God, even in the midst of a trial, or a difficult circumstance? If so, share with your group what that was like.

7. Next, we see from Scripture that joy and peace are rooted in eternity. Christian joy and peace are not just wishful thinking. They are based on real events (Jesus' life, death, and resurrection) and on real promises of an eternity yet to come. Read Revelation 21:4-5.

Discuss these verses with your group. How do they make you feel? What do they make you think about? Describe the hope that exists in these words for you.

8. In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Paul writes, *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."*

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” Paul’s words remind us that although we can’t create our own joy and peace, we can choose where we fix our eyes.

What are some ways in our everyday lives that we “fix our eyes” either on what is seen and temporary, or what is unseen and eternal? Even if difficult circumstances in your life don’t change, what can change in the way that we live through them, and the way we encounter God’s joy and peace?

9. Finally, joy and peace are found in the presence of God. Read Psalm 16:11, and John 16:33. Often, when we feel the most like we need joy and peace, what our souls are actually craving is to spend time with the God who loves us, cares about us, and will never leave us alone.

What are the ways in your life that you make time to be in the presence of God? What are the obstacles that get in the way of that time? What do you most desire from God right now - joy or peace? Why?

10. PRACTICE: Put on some prayerful music. Take time to get quiet for a moment.

Set a time for two minutes, and then pray this prayer: *God, fill me with your joy and peace.*

Just sit in the presence of God.

Ask one member of the group to close your time in prayer.