

Week One

## Defining and Choosing Joy

### CATCHING UP

- If this is your first time to meet together as a group, or if you have any new members, be sure to introduce yourselves.
- Go around the group and answer the question, *how has your week been going?*
- What do you hope to learn from this study?

### DIVING IN

*Pain is inevitable,  
but misery is optional.  
We cannot avoid pain,  
but we can avoid joy.*

Tim Hansel

***Discuss Tim Hansel's quote. What do you think? Is misery optional? How do we avoid joy?***

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.*

*- James 1:2 (NLT)*

<sup>3</sup> *There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, <sup>4</sup> and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.*

<sup>5</sup> *In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!*

*- Romans 5:3-5 (MSG)*

Joy is a choice. Therefore...

- Our joy is not dependent on *circumstances*.
- Our joy is not dependent on *other people*.
- Our joy is not dependent on *our emotions*.

You were meant for more. You were meant for joy.

A definition of **joy**:

*Joy is the settled assurance  
that God is in control  
of all the details of my life,  
the quiet confidence  
that ultimately everything  
is going to be all right,  
and the determined choice  
to praise God in all things.*

Kay Warren

So joy is...

- A settled conviction *about God*.
- A quiet confidence *in God*.
- A determined choice to give my praise *to God*.

### **Talking It Over**

1. Try to describe the differences between the word "happiness" and the word "joy."
2. Joy isn't dependent on external circumstances or people. How do we allow external factors to prevent us from choosing joy?

3. Look again at our definition of joy. Which part of the definition is the easiest to believe and live out? Which part is the easiest?
4. The Bible has a lot to say about how we influence the faith of others in our spiritual family. How can we, as part of the same Grace Group, encourage each other to choose joy?

## **SERVING TOGETHER**

Talk about how your group might be able to serve together, within the church or within the community once or twice during this study.

## **STAYING ON MISSION**

It's very important for every group to remember our big mission of reaching people who are far from God and bringing them closer to knowing Jesus. **Who do you know that you could invite to the group?**

Another way to live out our mission is to multiply and form new groups. Start praying now about how your group can spin off another group after this study.