

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

*“You thrill me, LORD, with all You have done for me!  
I sing for joy because of what You have done. O LORD, what great works You do!  
Psalm 92: 4 -5 (NLB)*

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Additional Ideas for Personal Use

## **STUDY SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS SERIES**

As you come to your study time, it is always helpful to find a quiet place with as few distractions as possible. Be prepared with your Bible, a notebook or journal and your pen or pencil. Leave your cell phone, your “to do” lists, and your appointment schedule in another room. Then breathe deeply and slowly and turn your mind and heart to your Heavenly Father asking Him to teach you, to guide your thoughts, and to give you the deep desire to get to know Him better through this time in His Word.

**INTRODUCTION** — This short section is to help you begin to focus clearly on the theme of each lesson. Take some moments to consider the theme verse, the ideas and the questions. Then slowly write down your responses and thoughts.

**MEDITATION and REFLECTION** — You can choose to read the suggested Scripture verses in one sitting or over a period of a few days. They are the heart of the lesson and your time will be well spent if you really do ponder and find joy and pleasure in the things that you are learning about the Lord. What verses stand out to you at this time in your life? What encourages you in faith and gives you hope? How do these truths help you to find joy and pleasure in your Heavenly Father?

**CONTEMPLATION** — As you look back on these verses and on the notes that you made, what do you think God wants to show you about your relationship to Him? What does He want you to believe about His love and purposes for you? What are the desires of your heart? Has this lesson helped you to find new ways to feel “joy and delight” in the God’s love for you? How? Give Him the praise and thanksgiving that you are sensing in your mind and in your spirit.

**INVITATION** — These suggestions are designed to move you into practical expressions from your study time. You will remember a great deal more about this lesson if you spend time and creative energy on a project that pleases you. It will bring you joy (as long as you don’t compare the results with anyone else’s project) and it will certainly bring delight to the Lord, too. You may just come up with an original idea that will be better than anything suggested. Take the risk and time and do it!

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Focusing on His Majesty and Glory

Lesson 1

*“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!  
You have set Your glory above the heavens. Psalm 8: 1*

### **Introduction**

What do you think about when you hear the word *majesty*? What comes to your mind when you think about *glory*? Perhaps the idea of royalty, a monarchy or a kingdom. Maybe magnificence, splendor or awe. They are words that are really inadequate to describe God, but within the limitations of our finite minds, they at least begin to express the transcendence, grandeur and expansiveness of the One who created and sustains the universe and yet came to offer to us His love and the gift of eternal life. As you quietly ponder these ideas, take some time to let God’s Spirit direct your thoughts and your heart’s desires.

### **Meditation and Reflection** –

As you read these verses, look for the ways they expand your idea of who God is and the extent of His greatness, power and magnificence. How do these ideas increase your delight and utter amazement in the one true God who loves you?

Exodus 15: 11 – 13 (Moses’ song)

I Chronicles 16: 23 – 34 (David’s psalm)

I Chronicles 29: 10 – 13 (David’s prayer)

Psalm 8

Psalm 19: 1 – 6

Psalm 24: 1 – 10

Psalm 96

Psalm 111

Psalm 104: 1 – 25

Psalm 145: 1 – 13

Romans 1: 20

Colossians 1: 15 -19

Hebrews 1: 1 – 12

II Peter 1: 16 – 18

Jude 1: 24 - 25

**Contemplation** – When is the last time you were in *awe* of something that you saw or heard? You might describe it as the feeling of being speechless, astonished, and full of wonder as your mind and spirit become saturated with admiration and amazement. Combined with these emotions, there is often an element of fear and reverence. As you read Proverbs 1: 7 and 2: 1 – 5, what ideas come to your mind about the importance of seeing God not only as your friend, your gentle shepherd, your guide, your heavenly Father, but as the eternal, omnipotent creator and Lord over all that exists – the Alpha and Omega. (Revelation 1: 8 and 22: 12) Find joy and delight in Him because of the transcendence of Who He Is!

### **Invitation** –

1. Have you ever composed your own Psalm? Try writing a heartfelt expression about the majesty and glory of your God.
2. Make a list of God’s attributes that help you focus on HIS majesty and glory. For example - omniscient and almighty. Write your definition of these words and then day by day give Him your praise for one of these amazing traits.

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Believing HIS Precious Promises

### Lesson 2

*Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm,  
for God can be trusted to keep His promise.* Hebrews 10: 23

#### **Introduction**

It has been said that "People with good intentions *make* promises but people with good character *keep* promises. What happens to a young child when a parent or caregiver repeatedly makes a commitment to a child to do something and then fails to follow through? What happens in a work environment when the boss assures his staff that certain things will be done but doesn't really keep his word? Optimism diminishes; trust is broken; respect is less; and the relationship will be damaged. What has been your personal experience when it comes to promises? Are you more trusting or skeptical?

#### **Meditation and Reflection** –

How do the following verses help you understand that God is trustworthy? That His promises are totally believable? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you read slowly through these Bible verses.

Genesis 15: 5 – 6 and Romans 11: 11 - 12

Joshua 21: 43 – 45 and 23: 14

I Kings 8: 54 – 61

Psalm 119: 103, 116, 140, 148, 162

Psalm 145: 13 – 16

Luke 1: 39 – 45

Romans 4: 18 – 25

II Corinthians 1: 20 – 21

Hebrews 10: 19 - 23

II Peter 1: 3 – 4

**Contemplation** – There is always some risk when you choose to believe a promise another person has made to you. Circumstances change. Life is not always predictable. New information might influence his or her decision or ability to keep their vow. In rare circumstances even the most trustworthy person you know may be unable to keep their word or change his or her mind. Is it different with God? How? Why? It will be worth your time to make a list of the attributes or character traits of the One Promise Keeper who will never forget, change His mind, or be unable to do what He has said He will do! Throughout Scripture there are examples of men and women who chose to put their faith in God and as a result, every one of them found out He would always keep His promises to them. Does thinking about your God and His promises bring joy to your heart? Why or why not?

#### **Invitation** –

1. What are 10 of your favorite promises in God's Word? Do you know where they are located in Scripture? Why not collect another 10 or more by asking your friends or family what is one of their favorite promises?
2. It can be very helpful to put a date in your Bible when you claim a particular promise for a specific need in your own life or on behalf of a family member or friend. It will reassure you of God's faithfulness.
3. How do God's promises bring solace and joy, comfort and delight to your soul and spirit? Give Him your praise.

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Co-operating with HIS Desires

### Lesson 3

*“I take joy in doing Your will, my God, for Your instructions are written on my heart.”*

*“To do Your will, O my God, is my desire (delight); Your law is within my heart.”*

*Psalm 40: 8 - NLB & NIV*

### **Introduction**

Would you agree that there is a major difference between *instructions* and suggestions, advice, or recommendations? How would you explain the difference? From the viewpoint of the speaker or writer, the expectation is that the receiver will follow *instructions* carefully, taking note of each detail and then do what is expected. From the perspective of the receiver the response to any of these concepts might be dependent on his/her view and/or relationship to the one expressing them. When it comes to God's instructions, how would you describe your attitude? Do you see them as good advice, helpful suggestions, practical recommendations or do you recognize the joy and delight that is promised to all those who allow God's Spirit to enable them to listen carefully and then follow them?

**Meditation and Reflection** – As you read these verses, look for the ways they expand your idea of what brings delight to the LORD, your God. How could co-operating with HIS desires bring you joy?

Exodus 15: 26 (Moses)  
Deuteronomy 10: 12 – 22 (Israel)  
Joshua 1: 6 – 9

I Kings 8: 54 – 61

Psalm 34: 11 - 16  
Psalm 37: 1 – 9 and 25 – 34

Luke 6: 46 - 49  
Luke 22: 39 - 44

John 14: 15 - 27  
John 15: 9 – 14

Romans 7: 21 to 8: 8

I Corinthians 15: 56 - 58

Philippians 4: 4 - 9

Colossians 3: 1 – 17

James 1: 25 and 3: 13 – 18

**Contemplation** – Spend some time reflecting on God as your Father, your Heavenly Father, as The One who knows you perfectly and understands you completely. Why do you and I resist doing life His way and under His direction? What are the benefits of living life under His direction and by the power of the Holy Spirit? What are the desires of your heart?

### **Invitation** –

1. Check out Galatians 5: 22 – 25. Do you think it would increase your joy by choosing just one of these attributes and then asking God to help you “keep in step with Him” by purposefully believing that He will enable you to really live it out this week?
2. How does Paul's prayer in I Corinthians 15: 58 motivate you to find your “joy and delight in the Lord” as you eagerly live a life dedicated to loving and serving Him?

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Understanding HIS Compassion

### Lesson 4

*“The LORD is gracious and righteous. Our God is full of compassion.”*

*Psalm 116: 5*

#### **Introduction**

It must have been difficult for the disciples to integrate the idea that this man, Jesus, really meant it when he said, “I came to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many”. They watched Him meet the physical needs of people – hunger, illness, death. They saw him touch the “untouchables”, eat with sinners, and pay attention to women and children. They heard Him explain His mission and His destiny. Eventually they began to grasp that He was not only the “Son of Man”, but the “Son of God”. As the Gospel writers shared their memories of Jesus, they often described Him by saying, “Jesus had compassion on them and . . .” Would you use the word “compassionate” to describe the God you know? Why or why not?

#### **Meditation and Reflection –**

How do the following verses expand your beliefs about God’s compassionate nature? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts pictured for you as you slowly read through these Bible verses.

Exodus 33: 18 – 23 and 34: 4 - 7 (Moses)

II Chronicles 30: 6 – 9 (Hezekiah)

Nehemiah 9: 16 – 21 (Praise of Israelites)

Joel 2: 12 - 13

Psalm 51: 1

Psalm 103: 1 – 18

Psalm 111: 1 – 9

Psalm 116: 5 – 7

Psalm 145: 8 – 13

Matthew 9: 35 – 38

Matthew 14: 13 – 14 and 15: 29 – 32

Hebrews 4: 14 - 16

James 5: 11 - 15

**Contemplation** – Too often we think of needs that are financial or physical when we consider the idea of compassion, but would you agree that being aware of emotional distress, spiritual hunger, social isolation, and personal vulnerability are equally important to observe? This would be a good time to consider the ideas in II Corinthians 1: 3 – 5 and Hebrews 4: 15 -16. When has God met you in times of distress or sadness? Did He use other people to show you His compassion? How? As you listen quietly to God’s still, small voice, what do you hear Him saying to you?

#### **Invitation –**

1. Take some time to write your own Psalm of praise, recognizing how God has shown to you HIS compassion, mercy and kindness. It can be a poem, a collage, a story or any kind of creative expression – just for you!
2. Are you willing to become a more compassionate person? Ask the Lord to show you specific people who need to feel God’s love through your deeds of kindness and intentional acts of loving care.

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Experiencing Loss and Suffering

Lesson 5

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

*James 1: 2*

### **Introduction**

Would you agree or disagree with this statement? "When we are prosperous, God is the giver. And we should humbly thank Him and not presume we shall not be moved. And when our mountain does crumble, God has taken it away, and He has eternal purposes for us in it. This is His test to reveal who we really are and purify us for His final favor." (John Piper) Could it be this concept could change the way we look at grief, disappointment, loss or troubles of any kind when they come into our lives? Many Biblical writers point out to us even in our most difficult seasons of life, when lament or silence is the best that we can utter, God offers to us the assurance of His presence and His sovereignty along with hope and joy. What has been your experience? What is your desire?

### **Meditation and Reflection –**

How do the following verses change your natural view of pain and loss, sorrow and suffering? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you slowly read these Bible verses.

Job 1: 6 – 12, 20 – 22 and 42: 10 – 12

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 8

Jeremiah 29: 10 - 14

Lamentations 3: 19 – 33

Psalms 34: 15 – 20

Psalm 42

Psalm 57: 1 - 5

Psalms 91

Psalm 119: 49 – 52, 81 – 90

John 16: 33

John 20: 19 – 24 and verse 33

Philippians 4: 10 - 14

Hebrews 12: 1 – 11

I Peter 1: 3 - 9

I Peter 4: 12 - 19

**Contemplation** – For most of us, this past year has brought very different challenges and loss into all of our lives. In Psalm 30, David reflects on his personal journey from prosperity and praise through a time of pain and uncertainty and finally to a recognition of God's purposes and a joyful heart. In what ways can you identify with David? How would you describe your view of suffering and pain in light of the Scriptures you have just read? What are you asking God to do for you in your present challenges and concerns? Is there a promise or truth that would help you experience joy or delight in the Lord?

### **Invitation –**

1. Take some time to remember the seasons in your life when you have experienced loss, disappointment or pain in some area of your life. (Be careful not to compare your experiences with other people.) How did these times affect your walk with the Lord?
2. Is there a promise or truth that would help you experience joy or delight in the Lord in the uncertainty of life? Write it down and then put it on your refrigerator or bathroom mirror so that you will see it often!

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Using Your Unique Gifts and Abilities

### Lesson 6

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,  
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*  
Jeremiah 29: 11

#### **Introduction**

There is a song that is often sung by young children which says, “I am very special. There’s no one else like me. God has made me special. There’s no one else like me.” It’s true, isn’t it? Even identical twins have some distinctive personality traits as well as their own physical distinctions. Why is it we are all tempted to dwell on what we consider to be our deficits rather than on the assets we have been given? Rather than playing the “if only” game, it would be good for all of us to periodically and humbly give thanks to God for the strengths and gifts which He has given to you and to me. What are some of yours? By the way, these are often quite different from what is most valued in our culture!

#### **Meditation and Reflection –**

As you read these verses, pause to think about what Scripture has to say about your uniqueness and abilities. How do these Scriptures help you to find delight in HIM? How will you express your joy and gratefulness to your Creator?

Exodus 31: 1 – 11

I Samuel 16: 6 – 7

Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10

Psalms 138: 8 and 139: 13 – 18

Matthew 5: 13 - 16

Romans 12: 1 – 8

I Corinthians 12

Galatians 1: 15 – 16

Ephesians 2: 8 – 10

Hebrews 10: 24 - 25

I Peter 4: 10 - 11

#### **Contemplation -**

Do you know the very simple prayer that was expressed so clearly many years ago in a hymn called “Make Me A Blessing”? The writer acknowledged that “out in the highways and byways of life, many are weary and sad”. Many have not heard of “Christ and His love”. Many are “sorrowing” or feel “helpless”. On our own, we can do very little to lighten their load, but isn’t it amazing that God allows us to be a channel of His light and His mercy, His grace and His love, as you and I allow Him to bless those He brings across our unique paths? You will be the one to experience deep joy and delight in the process!

#### **Invitation -**

1. In your own home – what are the actions and attitudes those closest to you would describe as your unique contributions to making them feel loved and appreciated? What brings you joy as you serve your family?
2. As you open up your heart, energy, and resources in this way, do you believe you are the one who will actually be blessed? Why or why not?

# FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

## Through Anticipating Eternity with HIM

Lesson 7

*“The full picture of our destiny is not yet clear, but we know this much:  
when Jesus appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is.”*

*I John 3: 2 - The Voice*

### **Introduction**

Because time - hours, days, months, centuries – is such a huge part of our mental perspective, it is challenging to think about words like forever, eternity and everlasting. Yet they are frequently used in our Bible, aren't they? It has been said that “mankind is created for more than this temporary life. We are made to live forever.” Would you agree? As you think about the end of your life and your eternal destiny, what do you believe as true? On what do you base your hope? How do these convictions influence your decisions and outlook now?

### **Meditation and Reflection** –

As you read these verses, use your God-given imagination to think about what is described for us in the Bible as the destiny of all those who have put their faith in Jesus. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3: 16)

Psalm 23

Psalm 21: 1 -7

Psalm 33: 6 – 15

Psalm 73: 23 – 26

Job 19: 25 – 27

Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Luke 12: 32 – 40

John 3: 16 – 17 and 36

John 14: 1 – 4

Romans 6: 23

I Corinthians 2: 9

Philippians 3: 20 – 4: 1

I Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18

Revelation 4

**Contemplation** - When you hear the word *heaven*, what comes to your mind? While we use that word to describe God's amazing creation that exists beyond our small planet, we also use it to refer to the place where God dwells, as well as the destiny of all those who have put their faith in Jesus. As you look back over these verses which ones bring comfort and peace to your mind and spirit? How do God's promises of eternal life reassure you and help you to find joy in The One who came so that you could spend eternity in His presence?

### **Invitation** –

1. Imagine eternity as described in Revelation 7: 9 – 17. Let these images bring you anticipation and delight.
2. As you slowly read Revelation 21 – 22: 6, make a list of the things you can anticipate now as you look forward to spending eternity with your Savior, Jesus. Let these promises fill your heart and mind with joy.

## FINDING JOY and DELIGHT IN THE LORD

*“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the Most High,  
It is good to proclaim Your unfailing love in the morning,  
Your faithfulness in the evening.  
You thrill me, LORD, with all You have done for me!  
I sing for joy because of what you have done.  
O LORD, how what great works You do! And how deep are Your thoughts.”*  
*Psalm 92: 1 - 5 (NLB)*

### *For your continuing study and inspiration*

*Through Connecting with HIS Worldwide Mission*      *Matthew 28: 19, Rev. 7: 9*

*Through Meditating on HIS Mercy*      *Ephesians 2: 4, I Peter 1:3*

*Through Solitude and Silence*      *Psalm 46: 10,*

*Through Discovering HIS Perfect Peace*      *Isaiah 26: 3 - 4, John 14: 27*

*Through Resting in HIS Love*      *Jeremiah 31: 3, I John 4: 9-10*

*Through Counting Your Blessings*      *Psalm 9: 1 - 2, Psalm 107*

*Through Being in Fellowship with HIS People*      *Hebrews 10: 24 - 25*

*Through Listening to the Holy Spirit*      *John 16: 13 - 15, Heb. 13: 1-2*

*Through Sharing Your Own Story (Your Testimony)* *Psalm 71:15-18 & 145:3- 10*

Looking for ways to grow in your faith and your love for the Lord? Search for the Scriptures that support each of these additional concepts and think of some of your own ideas.