

Finding Joy in the Journey

Hope Lutheran Church
November 2023



Immersed in God's Word, Finding Joy with Jesus

How Do I Participate? During the next 30 days, we will intentionally build joy into our lives using a challenge called *Finding Joy in the Journey*. The goal is to engage in a 5-minute session focused on joy – three times a day. While any time of day will work, we encourage you to slate one at the start of your day and one near the end; then drop the other where it best fits. Again, this is simply a suggestion. And if you miss one (or two) in a day, don't despair. Just re-joy-ce by jumping back in the next day.



What Do I Need? We are providing the 30-day **booklet** and have purchased the **Joyful Journey book** that accompanies the 30-day challenge. If you are not the reading type, take a breath. You will be reading less than 15 pages PER WEEK – but they are important pages. You will see a second book quoted, *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People*. We have taken the liberty to purchase these too. It is an easy read and meshes well with the theme. Reimbursement for the books would be appreciated but not necessary. A **journal** is recommended strongly. A **partner** (or partners) will GREATLY enhance this experience. And – a **willingness to participate** is helpful 😊.

When Do We Start? The actual 30-day challenge begins on **November 1st** and starts in your booklet around page 10. What precedes this is an explanation spread out over a “prep week” built to practice intentionality as you ramp up for this new habit. To do that, our plan is to engage in the booklet once a day, taking time to think about a joy moment and read through that day's part of instructions. Because some of you prefer options, here is your first one: The introductory material can be read in one sitting rather than over a week, but the challenge itself is built on daily participation. Off we go!

T-Minus 7 Day: Journey Instructions

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ~ Jesus, from John 15:11

Much of the Joy Challenge will be explained as you go, but **Week One** will focus on building joy by compiling personal stories of joy from your past. These sources of joy can be one-time events or repetitive experiences. More specific tasks arise once we get into the second week of reading. After that the days will flow with a distinction between sessions.

Session A will focus on joyful or appreciative memories of your past. They can be as recent as yesterday or back to the days of childhood.

Note: If your childhood (or other season of life) happens to be full of joyful memories, then absolutely include some of your joys from that time. If that period of memories is painful, avoid that arena for this week. We can draw joy memories from other seasons of life.



For future use, you will be compiling these *Joy Moments* into a list either in this booklet or on your phone. We are calling them a Golden Moments list to be explained later. The list can be found on p. 32 of this booklet.


During these five-minute joy windows, you can sit, walk, lay back, etc. The goal is to talk about (or think) of something or someone that brings you joy. The Joy Challenge has proven scientifically to re-wire the brain, teaching it (you) to look for joy in whatever environment you happen to be in.

You will find a joy-focused bible verse included with each session. Why? To help you connect this wonder of brain science with your faith life – and see this re-wiring as the handiwork of God our Father who has “wired us” for joy. One user describes the benefit of this God-design as “living at the speed of joy.”

T-Minus 6 Day: Journey Instructions

Often when we are not in a good mindset, bringing to mind joyful moments or opportunities can be difficult. This is one reason we create a list ahead of time.

J  At times, when we participate in exercises like this booklet encourages, we are asked to dig into our past and can be reminded of traumatic experiences. This can create the opposite sensation we seek in recalling joyful moments in life. What to do? 

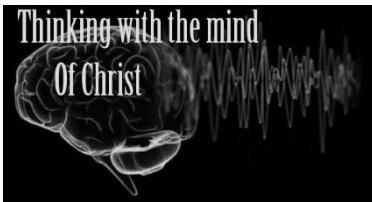
J  To assist us in navigating these traumatic memory intrusions, try using what is called an anchor memory. This is a time or place that, when we recall it, brings a sense of peace over us. When I envision sitting on the front edge of a boat on the Sea of Galilee, feet dangling over the water, I feel peace. I can even envision Jesus on that lake. I smile even as I type this. If God is present with you in your anchor moment, all the better. But not to worry, not everyone has such a memory with God present in this way. Any memory that produces a sense of peace or appreciation will work. This becomes your anchor memory, a time you draw on to settle your spirit when you are beginning to feel overwhelmed by other emotions.

In fact, this idea of returning to moments of appreciation are helpful any time. They are like gifts from God. According to Neuro-theologian Jim Wilder, we should start our times of exploration and healing by returning to times and memories where we know God best. From these good memories we can better explore other memories where we do not currently perceive God's presence in the painful memory. See *Immanuel Healing, a Six-Step Process for Resolving Trauma*.

T-Minus 5 Day: Journey Instructions

The Mind of Christ: 1 Corinthians 2:11b-12,15 tells us:

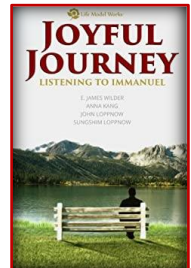
Who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us... we have the mind of Christ.



We can know the thoughts of God the Father with the help of God the Spirit through the mind of Jesus Christ. That is a scriptural teaching.

Session B will focus on what is called the *thought-rhyming* portion of Immanuel Journaling, described on pages 33-46 of *Joyful Journey* and defined on page 72. It is built around five phrases viewed from God's perspective. Journal entries are usually one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I SEE YOU, I HEAR YOU, I UNDERSTAND YOU (How big or hard it is), I AM WITH YOU and I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR SITUATION (what you are going through).

This is a good time to introduce the book titled *Joyful Journey, Listening to Immanuel*. It was written collaboratively by James Wilder, Anna Kang, John and Sungshim Loppnow. Total reading per week will run less than 15 pages. Quotes from the book have been dropped into your daily reading material.



This thought bubble will represent opportunities to receive or seek out the thoughts of God, a regular part of the Immanuel experience you are learning.

T-Minus 4 Day: Journey Instructions

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Psalm 107:1

Session C will provide opportunity to reflect on the day with gratitude. As with Session A, moments can be drawn from that day, week, or a lifetime ago. This session introduces you to interactive gratitude, a practice described on pages 21-22 of *Joyful Journey* and defined on page 71. You will benefit from a journal for this. This skill is described by Dr Jim Wilder:

[He] further emphasizes the importance of skill 4 saying that if we practice feeling appreciation for five or more minutes three times a day, any time of the day, our brain will reset normal to appreciation (from RARE leadership). Can you imagine your "go to" state as appreciation instead of anxiety, anger, despair, or some other negative emotion?... Skill 4 helps us feel seen and valued as though we belong. In fact, belonging can be created by a simple compliment. Unfortunately, for many of us appreciation does not fit with our learned responses. It is all too easy to think about and expect pain, distrust, anger, resentment and bitterness instead of joy. We all know someone who is grumpy, bitter and unforgiving. The poor brain that lacks skill 4 will focus on pain, problems, and the past instead of expecting good things. When this happens, negative emotions can define their personality. Thankfully, appreciation rewires the brain and restores vision for the downtrodden soul so we can go out today and give a hug, extend a compliment and find something good to remember and share. Neurons that fire together wire together, and how often you do something sets the tone for what your brain expects. Appreciation resets the thermostat for your nervous system. 55, Coursey, *Transforming Fellowship*.

What are you giving thanks for today – to God?

T-Minus 3 Day: Journey Instructions

While we're preparing to build joy, let's introduce the concept of joy in this journey. Brain science describes joy as a high-energy emotion (though it is more than an emotion). Its healthy low-energy counterpoint is peace. These are the second and third fruit of the Spirit following love itself (Galatians 5:22).

LOVE
JOY
PEACE

While joy can be categorized as high energy, it is not always appropriate to equate it with happiness. Here is an example of how a memory, though triggering difficult emotions can still be a glad-to-be-together experience.

I began thinking of a college friend who brought me joy but was then hit with a sad memory knowing he did not return to school; I lost a friend. As I shared this sadness with a current friend, he mourned that loss with me, and I found myself glad to have someone with me in my sad moment. This is glad-to-be-together joy with someone who mourned a loss with me.

On a smaller scale: I was looking forward to playing pool with friends (anticipated joy). I became sad that the opportunity was ruined because I got sick (loss). But I was glad my wife stayed home with me, made soup for us, and watched a movie (glad to be together in my sadness, then building joy).

SIDE NOTE: Regarding how to navigate each five-minute commitment, we suggest using an alarm. This frees you up from watching a clock. Remember: It is better sharing these joys with partners, with friends, and with God. But it is good to ponder them on your own as well.



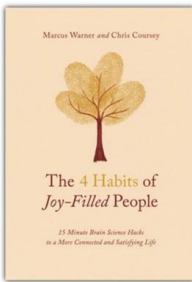
JOY: Who brings you glad-to-be-with-you joy when you are going through trying times? Enjoy your thoughts about them with God. Consider celebrating with them through a call, text or visit. I'm sure God would love being part of that moment.

T-Minus 2 Day: Journey Instructions

In the course of this next month, you will be introduced to a few books that revolved around this topic of joy and peace in the life of a disciple, a Jesus-follower.

If you are participating in this with Hope Lutheran church, we are going to follow this 30-day experience up with a year-long, dive into the foundational fruit of the Christian life – love, joy, and peace.

For now, enjoy the fruits of reading through the following book around your joy windows or other times.



Marcus Warner and Chris Coursey show us how to build habits that fill our lives with greater joy and satisfaction. Based on the latest neuroscience and attachment theory—but written in everyday language—*The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People* is practical and easy to comprehend. They provide exercises and tools we can put into practice

immediately. Joy is possible. It doesn't have to be a random experience that catches you by surprise now and then. Some of the most joyful people have endured unbelievable trauma. Discover the skills and habits you can develop that will enhance your very quality of life.

Day 7 Instructions for Joy Journey

We are almost ready. A thought for the final day of prepping. Although this is not a verse specifically about joy, it is related to its cousin peace, the low-energy companion to joy

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

~Jesus, from Matthew 11:28-30



This icon represents a prayer borrowed from Wild at Heart's ministry, used in their daily pause App. The activity is defined as *Benevolent Detachment*. The phrase used is easy enough to memorize. I will be encouraging you to consider incorporating it into the beginning and ending of your day. After a few reminders, all you will see is the icon. Here is the phrase:

*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

And finally...

This page break will help divide the three parts of each day.

— Finding Joy —

Day 1 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building JOY.

Romans 15:13 *May 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.*

Every session includes a Bible verse that references joy. Some verses, like above, involve building joy into your life. That designation will be in the icon to the left of the verse. After completing your 5-min Joy Session, you will close with a prayer based on that verse and joy.

Week One focuses on joyful memories. They can be as recent as last week or back to the days of childhood. Filling five minutes generally takes more than one memory. It has been compared to chewing gum. Once the flavor of the memory dissipates, move to another memory. Key words to these memories (like “Zoo Trip”) become important later to recall the joy again. For session 1A, think about places that you enjoyed as a child – a farm, neighbor’s house, school, a park, grandma’s house, sledding hill, local lake, etc.

Joyful memories involving faraway locations:



Key Words:



God of hope, I pray that You fill our *Joyful Journey* participants with all joy and peace as we trust in You, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Week One’s Reading assignment is pp. 1-13 of *Joyful Journey*.



Building JOY.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Session B will be an introduction to and eventually practice of Immanuel Journaling, a way to speak to and listen to Jesus, *Immanuel* – God with us. Consider this *Joyful Journey* quote:

Interacting with God is a simple idea, yet it is something many of us don't know how to navigate. Most of us can neither see nor hear God, and we have some reservations about people who say they do! Even when Jesus came in the form of Immanuel (God with us) those closest to Him had difficulty seeing God in Him. Simon Peter, who went back to fishing, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus failed to recognize Jesus after the resurrection (Luke 24). Jesus diagnosed them with sluggish vision (being slow-of-heart) as they were focused mainly on the pain in their lives... God has provided the Holy Spirit to empower us to experience Immanuel, the God who walks with us. p.2, *Joyful Journey*, Wilder, Kang, Lopppnow, Lopppnow (hereafter JJ, WKLL)

Joyful memories involving nearby locations:



Key Words:



Holy Spirit, empower us to bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In Jesus' name. Amen.

“Nothing grows joy faster than learning to experience the feeling of appreciation several times a day.”

p. 21, *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People*, Warner, Coursey

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Focus next week will turn to gratitude, an opportunity to dwell on things to appreciate that day, recently, or while reminiscing about the past. By the way, the spiritual discipline known as *Examen* invites the Holy Spirit to lead a mental walk back through your day looking for, among other things, times for gratitude. We are training our brains to find gratitude which in turn brings out joy.

“When we start our day with joy, it is easier to face the challenges we will meet throughout the day. When we know we will end our day in a place of joy and peace, sleep comes more easily and we do not dread life quite so much.” p. 20, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Again, with alarm set, run back through your day with appreciation (or deeper into your past as desired). After your alarm sounds, close session C with a brief worship of God based in joy. Both verse and prayer are provided. For now, continue to practice joyful memories exercises and then close with a little bit of worship joy toward God.

Joyful memories spiritually-oriented locations:



Key Words:

**Worship
JOY.**

Psalm 33:21 ESV

*For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.*



Jesus, Immanuel,
my heart is glad in You,
because I trust in Your holy name. Amen.



Now a thought-rhyming response from God:
*And _____ (use your name), My heart is glad in
You. I love that you trust in Me – and I love You!*

Day 2 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building JOY. Matthew 13:44 NIV *Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.*

What and whom do you treasure? Joyful events and the people associated with them are great memories. As we look back, we often have a sense of appreciation. This may be why author Chris Coursey calls these moments “packaged joy.” Such times elicit gratitude. The concepts of joy, appreciation or gratitude can be dwelt on during the five-minute windows. This concept of appreciation gives us the opportunity to work on an Anchor Memory described in the introduction.

Anchor memories recall a time or place that bring a sense of joy or peace to us. In fact, it probably elicits a smile as soon as it comes to mind. As mentioned earlier, If God is present with you in that moment, all the better. But not to worry, not everyone has such a memory with God present in this way. Any memory producing a sense of peace or appreciation works, a time when things worked out in a way you remember with fondness. This becomes your anchor memory, a time you can draw on to settle your spirit whenever you begin to feel overwhelmed by other emotions.



Session A: Focus on potential anchor memories from your past. You don't have to settle on the first one that comes to mind. The memory should bring you into a place of joy or peace. Try to think of how your body feels during joy generally. How does it feel during peaceful moments? Once you think of one or two potential anchor memories, spend 5 minutes dwelling on them. Then write key words to trigger the memories you used today. (next page) Lastly, read the following thought from Jesus derived from Matthew 13:44.

Potential anchor memories from my past:



Key Words:



[Immanuel thought] My child, I treasure you as part of My Father's Kingdom. For the joy set before Me, I endured the cross, giving up My very life, to buy you back – to redeem you. The fields are ripe for harvest My child. I love when you to join Me in gleaning those fields!

How do you feel listening to this possible thought from Jesus? What does it cause you to think? *You can journal about this.*

Finding Joy



Acts 2:2 ESV (from Psalm 16:11) *You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.*

The more often we check in with God, the easier it becomes to let Him make known His paths to us – paths that fill us with gladness. Here is a quote from this week's reading:

There are many reasons to improve our awareness of God's active presence in our lives. The best reason is the guidance and friendship we receive from "checking in" with God throughout the day. Other benefits include healing emotional wounds, enhancing character and building community. 1, JJ, WKLL

Session B: We are staying with the anchor memory theme, hoping to identify one (or two) events that can help soothe you in the midst of difficult emotions moving forward. Let's step into the session with a prayer for help. *Father God, help us recall a few events from our past that can be used to soothe us during difficult times. Amen.* Now Spend 5 minutes dwelling on joy(s).

Potential anchor memories from my past:



Key Words:

Having written out a few key words of joyful memories, finish this session with the prayer conversation below:



Lord God, I ask that You make known to me the paths of life; fill me with the gladness of Your presence. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



How might God respond to the prayer you just shared? (God the Father, Jesus, or the Spirit)

“Immanuel journaling is designed to take us through the sequence our brain uses to metabolize pain. Following the order our brain uses provides the simplest path from pain to redemption as well as nourishment for our souls. Immanuel journaling leads us to a place of gratitude and where our relational circuits are restored and activated.” 31, *JJ, WKLL*



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

— Finding Joy —

“Joy is a high-energy emotion related to knowing that someone is happy to see me. The relational happiness we feel when we experience spontaneous joy can also be experienced when we relive joyful moments from the past or anticipate joyful moments in the future.”

p. 33, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session C: Before your final 5-minute window today, take a moment to focus on a gratitude from the day – a thing or person you appreciated. Then move into your joyful memories in pursuit of an anchor memory. Finish with worship joy toward God using the bible verse and insight below.

Potential anchor memories from my past:



Key Words:

Worship
JOY.

Isaiah 9:3 ESV *You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

The above verse references the coming Messiah Jesus for Israel and us. It is the same section of Isaiah (9:7) that speaks of the Messiah as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace – quoted in Handel’s *Messiah*, a source of musical joy for millions by now. Consider listening to a portion of it for worship time.



Messiah Jesus, increase our joy in our day. Let us rejoice before You as those celebrating a harvest of joy, one that includes people as treasures who have been included in the harvest of souls. Amen.



Day 3 of Finding Joy in the Journey



James 1:2-4 NIV *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Session A: We have a new designation category and icon titled *Returning to Joy*. At times we get stuck in negative states, moods, or emotions. Returning to joy, especially through relationships, helps us regulate feelings known as the “Big Six” emotions: shame, anger, disgust, sadness, anxiety/fear, and despair.

“The Big Six”
Shame
Anger
Disgust
Sadness
Anxiety
Disgust

[JJ Quote] Me, my identity, is ultimately shaped by who I love and what pain I avoid. Love and the pain I avoid often compete within me to see whether my love or my fear of pain is stronger. As Christians we know "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18) but knowing this has little effect on our daily lives. Worrying whether someone will be angry with us often “casts out” our loving thoughts. What if we can show you how to interact with God in a way that is absolutely intimate and powerful and changes your life from the inside out? This process can be learned in a few minutes and most people experience changes from the first time they practice it.
2, JJ, WKLL

Joyful accomplishments/achievements, part one:



Key Words:



Jesus, remind me to pursue joy, especially with You. When I encounter various trials, knowing that as my faith is being tested, use them to produce endurance for my journey – keeping it a joyful journey



...And let Me build an endurance within you that will make you complete in My eyes, lacking nothing.
[Amen to that!]

Finding Joy



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV *Always be joyful. Always keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

“Joy helps you endure hardship well. Joy gives us the strength to deal with emotional pain. The idea of living with joy doesn’t mean that we don’t suffer or feel emotional pain. It doesn’t even mean that we get past our emotional pain quickly. It means that despite the emotional pain we have, we can still find relational joy in the midst of the hard stuff.”
p. 10, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session B: Remember, you can share your joy stories with others for your 5 minutes. It builds community and spreads the joy.

Joyful accomplishments/achievements, part two:



Key Words:



Oh Jesus, I want these traits in my life that the Apostle Paul describes: to always be joyful, always prayerful. And no matter what happens, always thankful.



Yes My child, this is My will for you – and for all who belong to Me. Let's keep journeying together.

Finding Joy

“Joy is the key to emotional resilience. It is like the air in the ball that lets it bounce. Let's face it. No one goes to counseling because they have too much joy and need to get rid of some of it.” p. 20, *The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*

Session C: Before your official 5-minute window, take a moment to focus on gratitude. Dwell on a thing or person you appreciated today. Then move into your joyful memories time. Finish with worship joy toward God.

Accomplishments/achievements of loved ones that brought you joy:



Key Words:



Psalm 100:1 ESV

A Psalm for giving thanks.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!



Lord Jesus, Immanuel, I borrow the words from this hundredth psalm to give You thanks with a joyful noise! Let my words rise before You like incense. Amen.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Day 4 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building JOY.

Philippians 1:25 NIV *Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.*

It is worthwhile to mention that joy is not the absence of negative emotion but the ability to stay yourself in the midst of difficult emotion. For example, if I had a difficult day but I share with a friend about it, I can readily say to that friend, "I am glad you were with me." Helpful people with us during times of difficulty is a form of joy: glad-to-be-together joy.

Session A: Focus on joyful memories of the past. Or drift back to yesterday and celebrate moments of appreciation. Note how your body is feeling as you revisit these memories: Can you catch yourself smiling, laughing? Are you relaxing?

Smells that bring you Joy? Why?:



Key Words:



My child, for as long as you remain, I want to see you continue to partner with others to progress in and find great joy in the faith -- together. Amen? [Amen!]

Who crosses your mind as partners in faith, life, and ministry?

"Joy is awesome! Joy is a high-energy feeling that you can't wait to share with others. It motivates us to be with people we love, and we feel alive and on top of the world when joy is present in our interactions."

p. 9, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

— Finding Joy —



2 Corinthians 1:24 NIV *Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.*

There can be great relational joy and peace when someone works with us for our benefit – not in a patronizing way, but as one truly interested in our personal welfare (God included). Yet we don't always benefit from God's peace and joy. Why? Consider this quote from Joyful Journey:

The third reason we miss God speaking to us is that we don't stop to check the characteristics of our thoughts to see if they are *poetry* that rhymes God's thoughts. We will explore how to check our thoughts more completely later, but now let us examine the main test. Thoughts that rhyme with God's produce *shalom*. Shalom is a state of harmony where everything works together, makes sense and is good. Shalom is the "peace of Christ."... Once Shalom is restored, we feel grateful. Gratitude and shalom are the hallmarks of thought-poetry with God so we have made them the beginning and ending points for Immanuel journaling. 3-4, *JJ, WKLL*

Shalom checklist (from p.54)

- Do I feel peacefully calm?
- Am I sensing God's loving presence?
- Am I confident that nothing can take me away from God's love?
- Am I portraying my weakness accurately?
- Am I still sensing God's interactive presence in my painful memory?
- Have my joy, peace, and hope increased?
- Has my desire to love and serve others increased?

Do these checklist items resonate with you by their presence or absence? On to your 5-minute joy exercise:

Session B: Remember, you can share your joy stories with others for your 5 minutes. It builds community and spreads the joy

People who bring or brought you joy:



Key Words:



[Immanuel thought] You could all use an ‘Apostle Paul’ type to encourage you to stand firm in your faith, to work with you for your joy. I enjoy working through such people – and it is joy to work through you to encourage others in their faith.



Finding Joy

Session C: Before your official 5-minute window, take a moment to focus on gratitude. Dwell on a thing or person you appreciated today. Then move into your joyful memories time. Finish with worship joy toward God.

People who bring or brought you peace:



Key Words:

**Worship
JOY.**

Psalm 95:1 NIV *Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*

This is part of the church liturgy in many hymnals – and in many hearts! Listen to this invitation from Jesus:



Come, sing to your LORD; make a joyful noise to the rock of your salvation! You can join your earthly songs with the angels’ heavenly praise! *What songs come to mind for you?*

Reliving joyful memories is a great way to spend a few minute (or a few hours) and it always leaves us feeling greater peace – like I’m going to be okay.

34, *The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*

Day 5 of Finding Joy in the Journey



Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV *Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Session A: Welcome to the third joy designation category: God's Joy. Whether you bring to mind any part of the Godhead individually or approach Them collectively, these verses show that God Himself is One of joy. We are still building our joy list but take a few moments to appreciate God's joy over you – and people like you. Again, note body sensations, mood changes, attitudes, etc.

Joyful memories involving activities, part one:



Key Words:



Lord Jesus, I am fixing my eyes on You as You continue to shape the faith You initiated in my life. Let me learn from You how to endure.



With the joy of saving people and pleasing God the Father compelling Me, I endured the cross, scorning its shame, and now sit at His right hand. Let my joy-inspired endurance encourage you so that you will not grow weary and lose heart, even as you face opposition in life.

— Finding Joy —



Matthew 18:12-13 NIV *What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off."*

[JJQ] We are excited to introduce a practical way to experience God's love and help that is easy to access even without a facilitator. We have noticed that even a one-time encounter with Jesus through Immanuel journaling can change someone's life... [it] is the third system developed to introduce an Immanuel experience. Journaling has proven to be the easiest way to learn the process.

5, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Remember, you can share your joy stories with others for your 5 minutes. It builds community and spreads the joy.

Joyful memories involving activities with family:



Key Words:



[Immanuel thought]: You know that I have WAY more than a hundred sheep. But I still know your name. I know you better than you know yourself. Can you hear My voice? Even if you wander, I'm calling for you – coming for you. And know that I smile big when we reconnect. Such joy!

Finding Joy



Session C: Before your official 5-minute window, take a moment to read through Anna's reflection from Joyful Journey. Think about God's compassion toward you. Where might that compassion have been present today? Then move into a joyful memory time. Finish with worship joy toward God.

[JJQ: Anna's reflection] One very practical element of journaling was that it allowed me to organize my thoughts and slow down the whole process of interacting with God. And because I was able to slow down and quiet myself, I was able to receive the precious gift of being able to experience God's compassion toward me.... As I built this foundation of interacting with God I began to be transformed in a very noticeable way. I now find myself becoming more and more aware of the shalom of Christ that also referees every aspect of my life. 7, JJ, WKLL

Joyful memories involving activities with friends:



Key Words:

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 20:4-6 NIV *May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests. Now this I know: The Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.*

You may not think of yourself in kingly or queen-like language, but any place where we have sway or influence is a kingdom of sorts. So, where does your kingdom reach? Whom does your kingdom touch? Who have you made kingdom pacts with to share or trade (like Kings Solomon and Hiram of Tyre).



Immanuel, in my part of God's Kingdom, You call me to rule over the earth – by loving and serving. I pray that You give me the desire of my heart and make all my plans succeed. That almost sounds selfish, but I submit all desires and plans to Your will and give You the glory as I seek to operate under the anointing of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Day 6 of Finding Joy in the Journey



Psalm 1:2

Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the LORD, and they study it day and night.

Study here has also been translated “meditate.” הגה *hâghâh* (Strong’s Concordance) means to “to moan, mutter, muse, meditate, or mourn,” neatly alliterating 5 *M* words in English and can also extend to “groaning and growling” as of a lion over its prey (Isaiah 31:4). But how does one study or meditate on the Law of the Lord?

[JJQ] If you grew up in a church where you were taught that God would only speak through the Bible, it can be very challenging for you to venture into writing down your impression of God outside of what the Bible says exactly. In this case feel free to write down the Bible verses as God’s response to you. Afterwards, run a simple test by asking yourself, “Does this feel and sound and feel like Jesus is right here next to me, speaking to me? If your answer is “Yes,” then great. If your answer is “No” or “I am not sure,” read the verses aloud to yourself. Is Jesus right next to you personally speaking the Bible verses as God’s tender and caring response to you? Afterwards, personalize and write the verses in a conversational way. See if this gives you a sense that God personally spoke to you.... The value of writing down God’s written words in a conversational and personal way is to increase our attachment with God. 69, JJ, WKLL

Session A: Focus on joyful memories or drift back and celebrate moments of appreciation. Note how your body feels as you visit these memories: Can you catch yourself smiling, laughing? Are you relaxing?



Joyful memories that occurred on the job:



Key Words:

Lord Jesus, help us find joy in obeying Your Law, and to study it, to study You – to meditate upon You and Your Word day and night. Amen.



I invite you to meditate on Me as you read My word. I reveal My character through My Word.

Finding Joy

**Building
JOY.**

Psalm 19:8 ESV *The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;*

[JJQ] Immanuel journaling is a tool that helps us to remain in Him. As we have shared Immanuel journaling one-on-one, in small groups and at conferences, we have seen the Father use this tool to help people live knowing that we are in Christ and Christ is in us -- consciously growing in the awareness of God's presence. This gives us the capacity to love others because we know His love is continuously available. We can then take the energy we spent worrying and direct it to loving God, loving people and helping them know God. This becomes possible because we learn through experience that we are loved and will be taken care of by God. 8, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Remember, you can share your joy stories with others for your 5 minutes. It builds community and spreads the joy

Joyful memories triggered by sounds or pictures:



Key Words:

Knowing that Your precepts are right Lord, let them bring joy to my heart; let the purity of Your commands enlighten my eyes. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Finding Joy



Session C: Before your 5-minute window, take a moment to focus on gratitude toward God that He is always glad to be with us. Read the selection below.

Then move into your joyful memories time. Finish with worship joy toward God.

[JJQ] Jesus, Immanuel (God with us), was born as a baby to live His life with people on Earth. Jesus shows us what it is like to live life with God. Bible scholars call this the “Immanuel principle of life....” Sometimes we fail to enjoy living in an Immanuel reality due to a distorted perception of God's character. God reveals to us that He is a good God through His word and the life of Jesus. God is always glad to be with us. 9-10, JJ, WKLL

Joyful memories involving gifts:



Key Words:

JOY.
Worship

Psalm 33:1-4 NIV

Sing for joy in the Lord, you who are right with Him. It is right for the pure in heart to praise Him. Give thanks to the Lord with harps.

Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song. Play well with loud sounds of joy. For the Word of the Lord is right. He is faithful in all He does.



I sing for joy, Father God, because I am right with You through Jesus. I praise You with the heart You purified by grace. If I could, I would give thanks with a harp or a ten-stringed lyre. I'd sing a new song and play as well as I could – joyfully. Instead let this be my “song of praise:...

[you're on – worship the Lord with gladness!]

Day 7 of Finding Joy in the Journey

**God's
JOY.**

Zephaniah 3:17 NIV *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*

We revisit God and His joy and gladness over us:

[JJQ] God is always glad to be with us. He treats our weaknesses tenderly. He actively works for our good. In other words, God is benevolently present with us. If our perception of God's character is distorted due to our own experiences of life's disappointments and our own histories of trauma, then having an all-seeing and always-present God could be stifling and produce fear instead of love and trust...To emphasize the importance of our awareness that He is relationally present with us, we will use the term "Immanuel sight" (*iSight*). *iSight is having the recognition that God is present, is truly good and perseveres in doing good for us.* 10, JJ, WKLL

Session A: Focus on joyful memories of the past. Or drift back to yesterday and celebrate moments of appreciation. Note how your body is feeling as you revisit these memories: Can you catch yourself smiling, laughing? Are you relaxing?

Joyful memories related to food:



Key Words:



[God thought] I am the Lord your God. I am in your midst, mighty and able to keep you safe; I rejoice over you with gladness; I will quiet you with My love; I will exult over you with loud singing.

— Finding Joy —



Psalm 149:4 NIV

*For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;
He will beautify the humble with salvation.*

Some folk equate pain and suffering with God’s displeasure. This can result in a weakened faith and trust in God:

[JJQ] If we have experienced a lot of pain or difficulties in our closest relationships, it usually shows up in the lack of close bonds we feel with people and ultimately with God. Some of us may find our iSight weak or poor and being in need of correction for this very reason. This might help us to understand why many Christians maintain a life of survival instead of thriving. The abundant, thriving life with God is fully experienced when we have true iSight.... No matter where our iSight may currently be, God can meet us there. 10, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Remember, you can share your joy stories with others for your 5 minutes. It builds community and spreads the joy.

Joyful memories involving animals:



Key Words:



Listen to Me: I take pleasure in My people;
You bring Me pleasure by your very existence!
Stay humble and watch Me beautify you with salvation.

Finding Joy

Session C: Before your official 5-minute window, take a moment to focus on gratitude. Dwell on a thing or person you appreciate. I appreciate the joyful memory of my daughter’s baptism which happened in a worship service on Christmas day in a barn with animals around. Ask me about it some day. Move into your joyful memories time; then finish with worship joy toward God.



Joyful memories related to music or the arts:



Key Words:

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 32:11 ESV

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!



Jesus, I am glad to be connected to You as the Lord, and I rejoice that You have made me righteous by Your loving sacrifice. To quote a song lyric, I will “rejoice in the Lord always – and again I say ‘rejoice,’”



I love to see you finding gladness in Me as Your Lord and rejoicing that I have made you righteous!

I celebrate your joy – whether in shouts or songs or simple silence. Thanks for sharing time like this with Me.



Bonus Learning Moment: We are introducing these five thoughts envisioned from God’s perspective.

- I SEE YOU,
- I HEAR YOU,
- I UNDERSTAND YOU,
- I AM WITH YOU;
- I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR SITUATION
- (what you are going through).

See how many you can identify in God’s conversation with Moses in Exodus 3:7-10

Anchor Memory (or two)

GOLDEN MOMENTS

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Day 8 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building JOY.

Romans 14:17 NIV *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Righteousness, peace, and joy in God's Kingdom are a by-product of spiritual relationship rather than spiritual busyness.

[JJQ] Growing a relationship with God takes active intention and participation from each one of us. Imagine our ball of yarn metaphor at work in our relationship with God. When we appreciate Him we throw the yarn and when we cry out to God for help we do the same. As He responds tenderly and graciously, He throws back the yarn and the connection is strengthened. God frequently initiates these interactions with us. He beckons and waits for us to throw the yarn back to Him. Moreover, even when we are frail and cannot throw the yarn, His spirit helps us. He never gives up on us and will work on our behalf until the end.

12-13, JJ, WKLL

Session A: Today you begin revisiting the joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. As you do so, look to see or hear how God was present in those moments. Invite God to share His thoughts about the joy you experienced. Notice body sensations, mood changes, attitudes, heart rate. Mark joys you went back over after pondering them a second time. This way you can cover them all at some point. And know that you can return to certain memories more than once. After your 5 minutes, finish your session on the next page.

Joy can also be found in our past and re-experienced when we remember joyful events from the past and allow ourselves to relive them in our minds. We can actually experience the same feelings of joy all over again.

34, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Dr. Bill Atwood suggests two helpful questions:

1. Where are You Lord in the memory?
2. What do you want to say to me?

p. 48, *The General, The Boy, and Recapturing Joy*



Lord Jesus, I see that the kingdom of God is not a matter of spiritual activities like eating and drinking in special ways, but relational time with You.



You are correct. The kingdom of God is a matter of relationship in Me that brings righteousness, peace and joy. This is the effect of My Holy Spirit's presence and work in you.

Week Two's Reading assignment is pp. 15-24 of *Joyful Journey*.



————— *Finding Joy* —————





Jeremiah 15:16 NIV *When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God of Heaven's Armies.*



Check out this video from Bible project about bibleproject.com/explore/video/art-biblical-poetry/

Jeremiah sets a great example for an approach to God's Word: The following quote is from the FAQs of *Joyful Journey*:

What is the role of the Bible as the written word of God in increasing our ability to listen to God's voice? We believe that God speaks to us in many ways, the Bible being the main and most reliable source. While interactive gratitude and thought-rhyming are more indirect ways of listening to God, we find that they are very helpful. The main reason we encourage people to enter into a conversation with God beyond traditional bible study is that people sometimes stop interacting with God when we feel that listening to God can only come from extensive Bible study. However, we want to emphasize the importance and necessity of engaging ourselves in studying the Bible on a regular basis in order for us to increase our ability to recognize God's voice. We believe that getting to know God and His character (who God says He is) is a crucial part of increasing our ability to recognize God's voice. p. 68



The *Joyful Journey* book teaches about interactive gratitude and thought rhyming as we move forward. For **Session B**, you are dwelling with joy on the first of five thoughts from God, in this case, each instance is drawn from a bible verse. It may be adapted into language of God speaking to you. It will lay groundwork for later use of these insights to help synchronize your thoughts with God.

I SEE YOU: Psalm 32:8

I will counsel you with My loving eye on you.

You may love receiving counseling from God (Yay!) but focus on the latter part of the phrase – *His loving eye being on you.* Go back to a few of joys and picture God smiling with His loving eye, enjoying your joy. Ponder for five minutes the knowledge that God looks at you with joy.



I Love Father God that You look upon me with favor... that Your face shines upon me! These teachings of Your Word are my joy and heart's delight. It makes me smile. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

—————▶ *Finding Joy* ◀—————

Session C: As we step into a new category, dwelling on gratitude, today's joy exercise is thanking God for people who bring you joy. For five minutes, think of (write?) why they bring you joy and share your appreciation with God. Bonus joy: Share your gratitude with these people. We are training our brains to find gratitude which in turn brings out joy. Close with a little bit of worship joy toward God.



Worship
JOY.

Psalm 4:6-7 NIV

There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!" You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.



Thank You Lord for the people who put joy in my heart. Thank You for putting joy in my heart by loving me unconditionally. Bless my resting. May I fall asleep meditating on You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Day 9 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Returning
to **JOY.**

Psalm 94:19 NIV

*When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought me joy.*

God knows we get anxious. During such times, He tells us, *“Don’t be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Philippian 4:4-7

[JJQ] **Immanuel means that God is always with us and desires to interact with us in all situations.** However, we often forget this truth or we are not really aware of it. Our awareness is often dimmed when we experience life's difficulties and become overwhelmed in spite of the reality of His presence and His desire to connect with us....

When we are awash in emotions or pain, we naturally seek someone emotionally stronger to help us. While this would seem to be a good time to seek God, perceiving His presence can be very difficult when we are flooded with painful emotions. Interacting with God is only possible when we perceive His presence. Reviving our desire for relationship through practicing gratitude allows for easier and pleasant connections with God that motivate us to practice more often. 16, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded in your Golden Moments. Look for God’s presence. Invite Him to share His thoughts about that joy.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Father God, when anxiety is great within me, let Your consolation bring me joy. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Finding Joy



Romans 12:15 NIV *Rejoice with those who rejoice [sharing others' joy], and weep with those who weep [sharing others' grief].*

The *Joyful Journey* book teaches about *interactive gratitude* and *thought rhyming*. For today's **Session B** focus, you are dwelling with joy on the second of five thoughts from God, in this case, each instance is drawn from a bible verse. It may be adapted into language of God speaking to you. It will lay groundwork for later use of these insights to help us synchronize with God.



I HEAR YOU: 1 John 5:14

This is the confidence you have approaching Me:
Ask anything according to My will, and I hear You.

God hears us in our rejoicing moments and the grievous ones. Not only that; He wants to share the moments with us, to help us cope. 🎵 "Cast your burdens upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee" He also wants us to do the same with others.



My child, rejoice with those who are rejoicing. Weep with those who are weeping. *Who comes to mind when you envision God sharing this thought with you?*

From a neuroscience perspective joy is always relationship that is because it is largely created by a right hemisphere to right hemisphere connection in the brain Min my right brain. Interacts with your right brain and we are happy to see each other. Usually through eye contact. The result is joy.

35, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Be prepared to write a sentence or two from here on out. You will be practicing interactive gratitude. We're training our brains to find gratitude which in turn brings out joy. We are also training our minds to listen for God speaking to us. Today we are "Giving thanks in all circumstances," and letting God respond.

[JJQ pp.15-17] 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." All means all. In every circumstance we are told to give thanks. When we give thanks, gratitude becomes the vehicle through which we become aware of the presence of Immanuel, the God who is always with us. Gratitude in the middle of difficulties allows us to have *i*Sight. We encourage those who desire to strengthen their *i*Sight to start by practicing gratitude during times of joy rather than distress. Over time we can learn to enter into gratitude in times of distress, but it is easier to learn during times of joy.

*i*Sight: Having the recognition that God is present, is truly good and perseveres in doing good for us.

Gratitude opens us up to the presence of God. Gratitude is a password into our awareness of the presence of God. We specifically chose gratitude because it is the easiest and fastest path to connection and because throughout scripture, God in His wisdom has always encouraged us to give thanks.

Alarm set, run through your day with appreciation or dig into your past to as desired. Then worship God.



Lord God, knowing that this is Your will for me in Christ Jesus, I take time to give You thanks...

in this circumstance: _____,

in this circumstance: _____,

and in this circumstance: _____.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

By the way, the spiritual discipline of *Examen* invites the Holy Spirit to lead our walk back through the day looking for, among other things, times for gratitude. After your alarm sounds, close session C with a brief worship of God based in joy. Both verse and prayer are provided.

Worship
JOY!

Isaiah 12:6 ESV *Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*

Day 10 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Returning
to **JOY.**

Isaiah 35:10 ESV *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Can God really use joy to overcome sorrow and sighing? *Joyful Journey* talks about a new normal that results from the daily practice of joy building:

Creating a new normal: Step 1: The first step (of three) to a new normal is learning to feel appreciation in my body. Appreciation, interactive gratitude and thankfulness will all work provided I notice what I feel like in my body during the emotions. Noticing the body sensations insures that the right parts of my brain are working together (prefrontal cortex, anterior cingulate and insula). When my brain discovers that I can feel appreciation at will, a new range of possibilities opens for me. I can open this door through interactive gratitude. 64, JJ, WKLL

Session A: Continue to re visiting joyful memories recorded in your Golden Moments. Look for God's presence. Invite God to share His thoughts about the joy you experienced. You may only get through a couple. Great! Descriptions and examples are on pp. 21-22 of *Joyful Journey*. Don't forget to notice body sensations, mood changes, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



[Immanuel thought] Keep “returning to Me” and let Isaiah’s words about *the ransomed* inspire you to come to Me singing with everlasting joy upon your head; I will replace your sorrow and sighing with gladness and joy.

— Finding Joy —

Returning to JOY.

Ezra 6:22 ESV *They kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.*

Annual festivals were a source of great joy for the religious community. Not being present caused someone to miss out on joyful times. That said, being present does not guarantee enjoying the moment. Here is one reason why:

[JJQ] Noticing God's goodness and appreciating His gifts can be viewed as depositing money in our "Immanuel" savings accounts, whereas focusing on painful events in life can be like withdrawing money! Thus, the daily practice of recognizing God's goodness is always recommended to strengthen our brains to habitually notice Immanuel in every situation including pain. In other words, our *iSight* will be strengthened as we engage in regular exercise of gratitude. 17, JJ, WKLL



The *Joyful Journey* book teaches about *interactive gratitude* and *thought rhyming*. For today's **Session B** focus, you are dwelling with joy on the third of five thoughts from God, in this case, each instance is drawn from a bible verse. It may be adapted into language of God speaking to you. It will lay groundwork for later use of these insights to help us synchronize with God.

I UNDERSTAND YOU Psalm 139:3

*I discern your going out and your lying down;
I am familiar with all your ways.*



Jesus Immanuel, bless the times of worship at my church to be full of joy. Cause the hearts of the local leaders to maintain good will toward our church and ministry and offer aid to us through partnership regarding this community. In Your name I pray. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

[JJQ] The Bible urges us to live in a state of gratitude. Living a life of gratitude is something God encourages and even commands. We believe that gratitude is recognizing God as our gift-giver. Appreciating the beauty of nature or a baby's smile is appreciating God whether or not we recognize Him as the gift-giver. Gratitude is deepened by the recognition that I received these gifts from God. Gratitude is recognition of our relationship. 16, JJ, WKLL

Session C: Dwell on gratitude. What and who are you grateful for? Dwell on things or people you appreciated today, recently, or while reminiscing about the past. You will soon be practicing interactive gratitude. What was God response to your gratitude? We are training our brains to find gratitude which in turn brings out joy. Close with a little bit of worship joy toward God.



**Worship
JOY.**

Nehemiah 12:43 ESV

And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.



Jesus, my friend and Lord, King and Lover, You have already offered the great sacrifice to end all sacrifices. All that is left is to offer a sacrifice of praise – or my life as a living sacrifice. May my praises – of song and lifestyle – be heard near and far. To God be the glory. Amen.



Routinely quieting ourselves and entering into feelings of appreciation just a few times each day lays a foundation for a life of joy as it trains our brains that joy and peace are normal experiences.

21, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Day 11 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Repentant
JOY.

Psalm 51:8 ESV

*Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*

We arrive at a new category known as Repentant Joy. It is a joy King David craved in the aftermath of his long journey of compounding sinful choices. Psalm 51 portrays his desire to return to a Joyful Journey with His God. Don't you crave to "hear" the voice of joy from God rather than condemnation? Most of us know the difference in voice tone between joy and disappointment don't we?!

Joyful Journey talks about a new normal that results from the daily practice of joy building: Here is the second step:



Creating a new normal, step 2. The second step

toward a new normal is learning to sustain the feeling of appreciation until I can feel appreciation for five straight minutes. To do this, I use the interactive gratitude exercise to collect a series of appreciation experiences and memories by giving them names like island sunrise, morning coffee, Fido at lake, Julie's birthday. Now I can keep my appreciation going longer by remembering one appreciation experience after another. When I can do this for 5 minutes, my brain realizes that I can feel this as long as I like. 64, JJ, WKLL

Session A: Revisit joy memories from your Golden Moments. Look for God's presence in them. Invite Him to share thoughts about the joy you're recalling. Notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc. Consider recording His thoughts

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Thank You for the reminder that there is joy on the other side of repentance. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You break rejoice. Amen.

Repentant
JOY.

Psalm 51:12 ESV

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

This is a follow-up to the morning session of repentant joy: We find David continuing his conversation with God in prayer:

[JJQ] Many of us have been rightfully taught that prayer is conversation with God. Interactive gratitude is a form of prayer, thus it is also a conversation with God. This sounds simple. Why then do many of us only engage in a monologue with God and not a true conversation? We tell Him our thoughts but we don't listen for His response and miss the blessed opportunity for intimacy with Him.

Intimacy with God is why it is so important for us to learn to listen for God's response. 18, JJ, WKLL



The *Joyful Journey* book teaches about *interactive gratitude* and *thought rhyming*. For today's **Session B** focus, you are dwelling with joy on the fourth of five thoughts from God, in this instance drawn from bible verses. They are adapted into language of God speaking to you. It will lay groundwork for later use of these insights to help us synchronize with God.

I AM WITH YOU Isaiah 41:10a

Fear not, for I am with you;

be not dismayed, for I am your God;



Even after we have fallen, we do not need to be dismayed, for God welcomes us as His own children, beloved in Jesus. Try to hear God speaking these words below:



My child, let me restore you to the joy of My salvation, Humble yourself and I will uphold you and endow you with a spirit willing and able to honor Me in your life.



Finding Joy

[JJQ] Based upon the positive effect of gratitude in fostering connections in relationships we develop a skill called "interactive gratitude." There are two parts in interactive gratitude. First, we give thanks to God; second, we slow down to perceive how God responds to our gratitude. We will learn interactive gratitude by journaling. This interactive writing time allows us to build and strengthen *iSight*. It is important to understand that the interaction between God and us is the defining difference between interactive gratitude and what we commonly consider as appreciation or giving thanks. 17, JJ, WKLL

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 71:23 ESV *My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed.*



My lips Father, forgiven and freed up, will shout for joy as I sing praises to You; my soul, loosed and light, again celebrate my redemption in Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 12 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building
JOY.

Luke 10:20 NIV *However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

The disciples experienced thought rhyming with Jesus as they returned from some amazing ministry. They had stories galore of demons submitting to their God-given authority. But Jesus led them toward a different thought, helping reveal God's character.

[JJQ] When we are thought rhyming with God we have the guard rails of God's character to keep our hearing on the right road. God's character is revealed by the person of Christ (the living word of God), the scriptures, the council of fellow believers, the presence of shalom and the fruit we bear. 20, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories previously recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite God to share His thoughts about the joy you're recalling. Don't forget to notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Among all the joys I celebrate, Jesus, let none replace the joy of Your salvation – that my name is written in heaven. Thank You Jesus. Amen.

Finding Joy

**Building
JOY.**

John 16:24 NIV *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

[JJQ] Practicing interactive gratitude is the easiest, fastest and even safest way of bringing positive changes to a powerless prayer life. Interactive gratitude also facilitates healing and restores our *iSight**. Although at times God heals us instantaneously, most times healing happens as we practice loving interactions with God and His people. 18, JJ, WKLL (*see definition on p. 35)



The *Joyful Journey* book teaches about *interactive gratitude* and *thought rhyming*. For today's **Session B** focus, you are dwelling with joy on the last of five thoughts from God, in this case, each instance is drawn from a bible verse. It may be adapted into language of God speaking to you. It will lay groundwork for later use of these insights to help us synchronize with God.

I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR SITUATION (what you are going through)

Isaiah 41:10b *I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*





Jesus, I want to learn to ask in Your name – and receive as You promised – complete with joy. Teach me how to practice this in faith. Amen.

Finding Joy

There will be times when we don't know how to get in touch with our feelings, let alone articulate them. Here is another FAQ from the book *Joyful Journey*:

What if I don't know what to write about, feel resistant or cannot feel grateful? We recommend starting where we are at the present moment. If we don't know what to write about, we can tell God honestly and state that we are feeling blank, resistant, angry, hungry or whatever we are experiencing at the moment. We encourage becoming aware of what our physical bodies are feeling right now. Body awareness will help restore our RCs. 62, *JJ*, *WKLL*



Luke 1:47 ESV

*...my spirit rejoices in God my Savior --
Yes, Lord Jesus, my spirit rejoices in You!*

Day 13 of Finding Joy in the Journey



Luke 15:10 ESV

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Joyful Journey talks about a new normal that results from the daily practice of joy building: Here is the third and final step:




3x Creating a new normal, step 3. The third step to a

new normal comes by practicing five minutes of interactive gratitude three times a day for a month. Starting and ending my day with appreciation and throwing a dose in the middle helps my brain realize, "I can do this all day." The marvel of our brain as a learning machine is that once it knows how to feel good, it can keep that good feeling going and have a good feeling any time of the day. It decides, "I'll make this my new normal." 64, *JJ*, *WKLL*

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories previously recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite God to share His thoughts about the joy you're recalling. Don't forget to notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 My child, there is great joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. This is the kind of joy I want to see become contagious. Join Me in celebrating those bathing in repentant joy – yours or someone else's!

Finding Joy

**God's
JOY.**

Luke 15:24 *For this, my son, who was dead, is living again; he had gone away from me, and has come back. And they were full of joy.*

What do you see of God's character in the above verse?

[JJQ] It is important to note that when we write down our impressions of God's answers, we must later check our impressions against God's character. God's character can be seen in who God says He is in the Bible. The whole bible reveals His character. Our thoughts of what God is saying to us need to rhyme with God's thoughts and His character revealed in scripture....The difference between our imagination and a mutual-mind state would be that God's character would be misrepresented and not bring peace. There is room for error in our impressions of God. We are limited and our thinking is deformed. Let's have the freedom to admit that we can be wrong in our impressions of God, just as we can be wrong about our impressions of what our spouse or family members might be communicating to us. This fallibility does not stop us from seeking to understand what our loved ones are saying. 20, JJ, WKLL



[Father God] You, My child, were once dead in sin, but now you are alive in Christ (Romans 6:11) That is why I am full of joy regarding you. Don't ever question your value to Me. I gave My own Son for you. I love you.

Finding Joy

The following quote is a wonderful preferred future:

[JJQ] Ultimately if we are in an intimate and growing relationship with God, we will begin to exhibit mutual-mind states with Him. Our thoughts and His thoughts will flow fluidly between us and we will begin to think and look like the One we love. We will begin to like what He likes, love like He loves and grieve with Him for the things He grieves. We will begin to reflect Him more and more. Our interactions will mirror our growing bond with God. 21, JJ, WKLL

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 43:4 NIV *Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.*



As David did and so many after him too, I join the procession to go to Your altar Lord God. You God are my exceeding joy; with music I will praise You, my God.



Day 14 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Repentant
JOY.

Ecclesiastes 8:15.

So I commend the enjoyment of life because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

Today we kick off with another FAQ from *Joyful Journey*:

Can people abuse Immanuel journaling by claiming their thoughts and feelings are from God? The basic purpose of Immanuel journaling focuses on developing a mind that mirrors how God thinks about the daily business of our lives. To want to elevate anything from Immanuel journaling to the status of “God said” is already an abuse. A better phrase might be, “I am feeling more peaceful now since I am able to see the situation (or person) the way God sees than before I journaled.” 67, *JJ, WKLL*. See pp. 67-68 for further potential abuses.

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God’s presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you’re recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



I, the Son of God, author your days “under the sun,” including your daily bread, drink, and work. It makes Me glad when you enjoy life, eating and drinking with a glad heart.

Finding Joy

**Repentant
JOY.**

Isaiah 55:12 ESV *For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

Author Chris Coursey writes, “We all need a manageable rhythm in which we balance times of high energy joy with low energy peace. Some of this starts with just paying attention to our calendar. We need to plan ahead for the rest we need. It is also important to pay attention to our own sense of being overwhelmed and recognizing when we need a break.”

63, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

[JJQ] The first step in interactive gratitude is voicing our appreciation to God. The next step involves writing down our impression of what God is thinking and saying to us. There are many questions that arise for us when we attempt to write down our impressions of what God might be saying to us. Some of the questions that arise are:

- How can we be sure that are impression of God's response to us is not just from our imagination or what we want to hear?
- Could these thoughts be lies from Satan?
- God only speaks through the Bible, doesn't He?



Under My care, you can go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you will break forth into singing, and the trees of the field will clap their hands. Can you picture that with Me?

— Finding Joy —

[JJQ] We may find writing God's response is difficult if we think we are putting words in God's mouth. We know we are capable of misunderstanding what God might be saying to us, yet the greater danger arises from never attempting or desiring to understand what God might be saying to us to guide us. 19, JJ, WKLL

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 100:1-2 NIV *Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.*



Lord God, I am but one part of the earth,
but I join creation in shouting joyfully to You Lord!
I am but one person, but I commit to serve You Lord
with gladness and come before you with songs of joy.
Amen.



Day 15 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Week Three's Reading assignment is pp. 25-31 of *Joyful Journey*.



Chris Coursey writes with Marcus Warner, “As Christians, we believe God wired us for joy and that He desires to share joy with us.” (179, *The 4 Habits*). They then quote John 15:11-12:

**God's
JOY.**

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.


“These things” referenced by Jesus most likely connect to the teachings of that evening, but particularly the role of abiding in Jesus. This is a good verse to connect to the next quote:

[JJQ] We cannot share all of ourselves or listen to everything God would share in one sitting. A vibrant relationship requires on-going interactions. Practically speaking, even in human relationships such as marriage, we have misunderstandings and must come back and ask clarifying questions. That is how relationships grow and work, even with God. God works with our ability to understand. Sometimes He allows us to have supernatural insight into situations, but often we become more attuned to God as we grow and mature. 20, *JJ, WKLL*

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus thought] I want you to hear Me speaking to you about My joy being in you, and having you be full of joy. It flows so well when you receive love from Me and love others as I have loved you.



John 17:13 ESV (Jesus praying to the Father)
*But now I am coming to you, and these things
I speak in the world, that they may have my
joy fulfilled in themselves.*


This verse is God talking to God within the triune Godhead, an interactive, life-giving relationship that brings joy to others.

[JJQ] Interactive gratitude builds joy. The daily habit of interactive gratitude increases our awareness of God's Immanuel presence and His goodness toward us. Moreover, the regular practice of interactive gratitude will allow our conversation with God to deepen more quickly.
62, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



 [Jesus] Come to Us in prayer, interact with Us and be filled with joy among Us. You too can speak of Our love to the world.

Most of the problems we have in understanding joy come when we miss the important role relationships play in creating it. Not all *pleasure* is relational. But all *joy* is relational. Whether we feel that joy by remembering the past, anticipating the future, or experiencing the present, there is a relational component to joy and it is that relational component that separates a mere pleasure from real joy.

35, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

————— *Finding Joy* —————



Philippians 3:1 *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me – and is a safeguard for you.*

It is curious to see the Apostle Paul using the term *safeguard* about joy, calling disciples to “rejoice in the Lord” as a form of protection. Look at the following contrast:

The alternative to joy is fear, and a fear-fueled brain is not a pretty thing. When fear runs our brain, we learn to “fear map” our world. We amplify pain and live waiting for the other shoe to drop. When our brain learns to run on joy, we still have problems to solve, but our brain becomes trained to understand that problems aren’t the end of the world. As long as my brain knows it can get back to a place of peace, it will naturally be less anxious. We don’t fret when the sun is setting because we know it will return in the morning.

10, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week.
Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for
and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[Jesus] See how Paul urges you to take joy in Me?
Deepen this habit as you now know that it is healthy
for you spiritually, physically, and relationally.



Day 16 of Finding Joy in the Journey

**Returning
to JOY.**

Habakkuk 3:17-18 ESV *Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.*

These verses near the end of Habakkuk's writing remind us that joy in or with God is not some magical amulet to ward off bad things. Joy with God does build resilience in us that can be sustained in difficult times and enables us to bounce back more quickly.

To be clear -- having a well-developed joy pathway doesn't mean you quickly stop feeling unpleasant emotions like fear, grief, anger, or despair and suddenly feel happiness instead. It means that these emotions don't trap you in the back of your brain without access to the command center. Well-developed joy pathways enable us to maintain a stable identity regardless of how we feel.

42, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Lord God, let this challenge, to rejoice in You no matter what, resonate in my soul. Even with fruitless trees and vines, minimal production or growth, teach me to still take joy in You, the God of my salvation. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Returning to JOY.

Psalm 30:5 NIV

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



[JJQ] Unresolved pain launches and automatic search for relief. Ed Khouri and colleagues explain what happens when we are unable to process distress and intense emotions then turn to temporary relief. (Wilder, 2013) We seek behaviors, experiences, events, people and substances to numb our pain [BEEPS]. Khoiri explains how this practice usually becomes addictive. Addictions can then lead to even more trauma. The sad thing is that Christians are not exempt from this reality. 27, JJ, WKLL

There is a bonding or attachment element to the experience of joy that cannot be reproduced simply by medications herbs or drugs.

35, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey



Do you know that even in My momentary anger, My love remains constant toward you – and My favor lasts a lifetime? Remember that I am for you.

— Finding Joy —



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[JJQ] The mental activity of avoiding pain distracts us from relational connection with God and others. Being overwhelmed disconnects us. If disconnection, like dropped calls, becomes a repeated experience with God, our trust in God begins to decline. We end up feeling abandoned in our pain and begin questioning God's goodness toward us. Our distrusting God's goodness may grow deeper with repeated unsuccessful connections. Distrust becomes one of the roadblocks to *i*Sight with God and we become stuck. Without interaction, many of us become hardened or indifferent to God altogether. After all, God seems indifferent to our suffering or incompetent or even cruel... Unfortunately, if we fail to connect to God many of us quit trying. Other well-meaning fellow believers may encourage us to pray harder or to study the scriptures, but these remedies may also fail to restore our connection with God. We need to troubleshoot our "dropped calls." There is often a source of interference and Immanuel journaling can help us find the cause. 25-26, JJ, WKLL

Worship
JOY.

1 Chronicles 16:33-35 NIV *Let the trees of the forest sing, let them sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Cry out, "Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise."*



Father God, as the ark of Your presence inspired David to celebrate You, I now take time to join the trees of the forest singing joy before you. I give thanks to You Lord, for You are good; Your love endures forever. Continue to save us, gather us, and deliver us from the evil one that we may give thanks to Your holy name, and glory in Your praise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 17 of Finding Joy in the Journey



Proverbs 17:22 ESV

*A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

In the book, *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People*, they address pain: Let's be real. It's no fun to stay stuck in unpleasant emotions with no path back to joy. Returning to joy and peace means making the shift from the back of our brain where we isolate ourselves when things go wrong to the front of our brains where our relational self resides. p. 106

[JJQ] When pain has been fully processed the experience usually produces wisdom. What caused us pain was not always a good thing, but a full resolution brings good from everything. This is redemption. If we allow God to take us through a proper pain-processing sequence, we develop deeper compassion and empathy. Moreover, those who courageously allow this process to bear fruit ultimately find they love God and others more deeply. 27, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Immanuel, since a joyful heart is good medicine, fill my heart with joy – and let it be contagious! And since a crushed spirit dries up the bones, deliver me from bone-crushing spiritual problems as I cast my burdens upon You O Lord. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



You have likely experienced the following description yourself: Immature people often change their personality depending on the emotion they feel. Others tend to walk around them on eggshells because of it. One of the characteristics of adult-level maturity is the ability to act like ourselves even under stress. The world needs more adults. We need more people who are running on the fuel of joy and handling their emotions with predictable stability. 125, *The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*

[JJQ] Suffering well means that we go through difficulties in life without being traumatized and that we respond to each situation relationally. We were created as relational beings, but we forget that when reacting out of pain. In order to suffer well, we need maturity. All Christians are called to develop maturity. One of the main characteristics of a mature person is the ability to handle difficult emotions. Mature people are able to return to a state of calm from the six big emotions. Maturity rises to life's challenges rather than reacting from fear. Maturity allows us to live according to God's values, remembering that we are created in his image to do good works. Although life is not easy, we can still live by our values during challenging times.



Listen to Me: Rejoice in hope no matter what – I see you. Be patient in tribulation – I am with you. Continue in fervent prayer – I hear you.

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[JJQ] Trauma hinders maturity and can blind us to who we really are. Many of us have experienced times when pain rather than our Christian values has determined how we act. When suffering well, we remain the same. Living by God's values, whether in pain or in joy, we have metabolized (digested appropriately) our pain and can remain integrated. Christians are to be known as a group of people who "suffer well." 27, JJ, WKLL

**Worship
JOY.**

1 Peter 1:7-9 NIV *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. For you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*



[Jesus] My child, when you experience painful situations, view them as opportunities to let your faith shine. It will result in praise, glory and honor when I come back. Though you have not seen Me, you love Me; and even though you do not see Me now, you believe in Me. This enables Me to fill you with an inexpressible and glorious joy – the salvation of your soul.



Day 18 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Contagious Romans 15:32 ESV
JOY. ...by God's will I may come to you with joy
and be refreshed in your company.

I love the idea of gathering to be refreshed. Worship of course is a great tie to do that, but so are midweek get-togethers for lunch, small group and just chatting. The very definition of joy (and peace) comes from being with others whom you enjoy.

We all need times of high-energy joy and low-energy rest. Nurturing a rhythm means protecting ourselves from always having to be on. We can't always be in a high-energy state. Sometimes we need alone time without a lot of noise or emotional demands and sometimes we need quiet time with just 1 or 2 other people where we can enjoy being together in a low-energy state.

62,63, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Father God, may Your will be done that we, Your children, come together with joy and get refreshed in each other's company – over and over and over!
In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Contagious JOY.

Luke 19:6 NIV *Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy.*

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Jesus interacts with Zacchaeus, and after choosing him, they have dinner together. During this time, He apparently reminds the tax collector of his place before God. Not one of offense, but of acceptance. Then look what happens (see Luke 19). Joy abounds. His relational circuit with God turned on.

[JJQ] The activation of trauma-based feelings of being alone and in pain can turn off our RCs. The sudden blackout explains why we are sometimes unable to perceive Immanuel. God is always here to interact with us during times of pain, but our *i*Sight may be switched off. Karl Lehman uses an analogy of the ATM machine in relation to our RCs to help us understand this concept. When an ATM machine is out of order, we cannot access our own money in the bank. When our RCs are off, it becomes very difficult for us to access the memory bank of who Jesus (or anyone) has been to us. This metaphor helps us understand why we have a difficult time interacting with God when we are in pain even though Immanuel never leaves or stops wanting to interact with us. 28, JJ, WKLL



Tree or no tree, You have chosen to come to me, not just into my house, but into my heart. I welcome You with a renewed excitement and joy. What's next?

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



Have you ever considered that our brain can shut God out? That's what happens when the brain switches off the relational circuit. It doesn't just shut out fellow human beings, it shuts out Father God as well. But He is patient with us – and pursues us to restore our relationships with Him and others.

[JJQ] Relational circuits are very much like our visual circuits. When we close our eyes, we cannot see anything. Or, think of RCs like a light switch. If we turn off the light switch in a room, we might not be able to see things as clearly as we did when the lights were on. When our RCs are off, it is difficult to relate to others, including God. The obvious first step for interacting with God is to make sure our RCs are on. Our RCs allow us to perceive God's interest in us. When our RCs are “on,” our natural desire is to connect and interact with people and God because we naturally want to participate in giving and receiving life and love and we value our relationships, whether we are in joy or in pain. 28, JJ, WKLL

Worship
JOY.

Psalm 16:11 *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*



Holy Spirit, make known to me the path of life;
Jesus, in Your presence there is fullness of joy;
Father, let Your right hand brings pleasures
forevermore. These truths I celebrate in Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 19 of Finding Joy in the Journey

**Returning
to JOY.**

Luke 6:22-23 NIV *Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.*

Today we ponder the reality of suffering and pain in life, both due to faith and with life in general:

[JJQ] The life of Jesus on earth, which culminated on the cross, modeled suffering well. It was evident in the garden of Gethsemane that Jesus did not want to go through with His imminent death. He was in so much distress that He was sweating blood, yet He was still able to remain connected to the Father and think of the welfare of His disciples when the guards seized Him. Jesus did not change under pressure and exhibited the same thoughtfulness, forgiveness and compassion as before. His deep connection with the Father enabled Him to suffer well. God invites all of His followers to live our lives the same way as Christ. 27,28, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



[Jesus] My child, do you consider it a blessing when people hate you because of Me? When they exclude you and insult you? Take joy in this -- seriously. You are in good company with My prophets of old.

As Christians, Chris and I (Marcus) are convinced that it helps to have a relationship with a God who is happy to see us and happy to go through suffering with us because it means we are never alone.

154, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Finding Joy

Returning
to
JOY.

1 Peter 4:13 ESV *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Joy helps you endure hardship well. Joy gives us the strength to deal with emotional pain. The idea of living with joy doesn't mean that we don't suffer or feel emotional pain. It doesn't even mean that we get past our emotional pain quickly. It means that despite the emotional pain we have we can still find relational joy in the midst of the hard stuff. For example, joy-filled people still grieve when they lose a loved one. The point is not that joy makes them immune to bad feelings. The point is that even in the midst of the upsetting emotion they can share joy with others and that joy helps them get through the hard times.

10,11, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey



[Jesus] I understand suffering. It's not a happy thing, but I am with you in it. Let others help you in time of need, grieving with you. And keep your eyes on Me through all of it. As the Apostle Paul said, it will produce perseverance, character, and hope (see Romans 5:1-5). My Spirit will accompany you throughout the process. Trust Me.

Finding Joy

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



Stress expert Dr Andrew Steptoe of University college in London states that while stress has a negative effect on certain biological systems happiness and “has a protective effect on those same biological pathways.” We now know that simply thinking about joy and reflecting on the good stuff changes enzymes in our body and these changes help prevent inflammatory disease.”

11,12, *The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*

**Worship
JOY.**

Psalm 27:6 ESV And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.



How many times Jesus have You lifted my head up – and delivered me from my enemies! Sometimes that enemy is myself, sometimes the evil one, and sometimes a world of people not aligned with You. But as for me and my house, we will sing and make a melody to You!

[The expression returning to joy] refers to recovering our ability to be glad with someone in spite of the emotion. When we get triggered, our emotional self disappears and we act like someone else. Returning to joy is the process of getting our true self back online. This happens when we can find joy in another person even though our emotions are still upset. 105, *The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*



Day 20 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Contagious

Philippians 2:1-2 ESV

JOY.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

As we dig further into the idea of paying attention to our relational circuits, we introduce the book's checklist:

Relational circuits checklist (Are our RC's on or off?)

- I just want to make a problem, person or feeling go away.
- I don't want to listen to what others feel or say.
- My mind is "locked on" to something upsetting
- I don't want to be connected to _____.
(someone I usually like)
- I just want to get away, fight, or freeze
(versus Calm + Connect)
- I more aggressively interrogate, judge and fix others.

If we answered YES to any of these questions, then our relational circuits are OFF. Everything related to relational conflicts will turn out better when our relational. Circuits are back ON. 29, JJ, WKLL

Well, that kind of situation makes it hard to be joyful, so let's get the circuits back on and move into...

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys





[Jesus] Because I am with you (not just individually but collectively), let Me encourage you to be of the same mind, share the same love, and be of one accord.



Let Your Holy Spirit lead the way for us, displaying a comforting love, deep affection, and true sympathy – resulting in a joy that would make the Apostle Paul smile – that would make You smile Jesus. Amen.

Finding Joy

Contagious
JOY.

Philippians 2:17-18 ESV

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



There is a social system in every brain that controls whether we feel like ourselves or not. This system is run by our RCs – relational circuits. When our RCs are firing on all cylinders, our relational self becomes present and we tend to feel and act like ourselves. But when these RCs start to misfire and shut down altogether, our non-relational self comes out. When this happens, we live out of fear rather than joy.

81, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey



Father God, I want to be glad and rejoice regardless of my circumstances. Let me be poured out as a drink offering to Your glory and for the benefit of others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Finding Joy

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



There are many other “joys” to be had, but there is an inherent danger to them. See how the quote below resonates with your experience.

Low levels of joy make us vulnerable to artificial substitutes for the real thing. Addictions form as attachments to non-relational stimulants that usually create a sense of pleasure or momentary happiness. Thus my addiction makes me feel happy temporarily. It gives me a short-term pleasure boost that numbs my pain and replaces it with pleasure. The problem of course is that it doesn't last and it creates other problems that generally make my life worse than if I didn't have the addiction. 11, *4 Habits, Warner, Coursey*

The beauty of Immanuel journaling is that it helps us become aware of God's presence during painful as well as joyful moments.... A tremendous amount of healing is available for anyone willing to engage regularly in Immanuel journaling. 54, *JJ, WKLL*



Philippians 4:4 NIV

*Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, rejoice!*



I am choosing to rejoice in the Lord always;
Again and again! Amen!

In Jesus' name I will rejoice! Amen.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Day 21 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Contagious 3 John 1:4 NIV
JOY. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”*

While the Apostle Paul referenced himself as a spiritual parents, physical parents also share contagious joy (or fear) with children. Check out this quote: Parents with well-built joy houses in their inner world have greater ability to enter into all of the big emotions their children face, deal with their own big emotions, and still find their way back to a place of calm and appreciation at the end of the day.

126, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

[JJQ] Our most powerful communication does not come from our words because our brains are designed to pick up signals of other's moods and feelings through facial expressions, voice tone, posture, timing and other body language. The brain is a natural amplifier for these feeling signals. When two people are sharing the same feelings, those feelings are intensified. If one brain shares another's joy, the result is amplified joy for both brains. 50, *JJ, WKLL*

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Let us experience the great joy of knowing that our children are walking in the truth. If they are already there, praise Jesus! If we are still waiting, Thy kingdom come to them! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Contagious 1 Thessalonians 2:20 ESV
JOY. *For you are our glory and joy.*

The above verse highlights that people – in this case the people of Thessalonica – are the source of joy for the Apostle Paul. Who are the people who bring you joy simply to think about them? Are they connected to you in the faith? Can they pull you out of a relational funk?

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



[JJQ] When our RCs are off, we amplify problems instead. So when a group is in shalom and someone reads a shalom story, the group will amplify shalom. If people lose shalom when a story is read, we should ask God why the Referee has just blown the "no shalom" whistle. going through a shalom checklist regularly can be very helpful....

Shalom checklist (from p.53-54, *JJ, WKLL*)

- Do I feel peacefully calm? (This topic “fits” together correctly now.)
- Am I sensing God’s loving presence?
- Am I confident that nothing can take me away from God’s love?
- Am I portraying my weakness accurately?
- Am I still sensing God’s interactive presence in my painful memory?
- Have my joy, peace, and hope increased?
- Has my desire to love and serve others increased?



Jesus, thank You for the people who bring us joy, especially those who share our Christian faith with us!

————— *Finding Joy* —————

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[JJQ] Many Christians fail to recognize that turning our RCs back on is essential for restoring peace. In fact, it is our first priority. One of the first things to happen when we lose our peace is that our RCs turn off. We become focused on problems because we do not know it is possible to restore our RC functions. Our solution to solving problems with our RCs off is to do the right thing rather than restore relationships. Doing many right things with your RCs off can lead to doing very wrong things when it comes to restoring relationships in the Kingdom of God. 29, 30, JJ, WKLL



Psalm 37:4 NIV

*Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.*



Immanuel, God-with-us:

How can I delight myself in You Lord?

What would bring You joy?



[Jesus] Come and be with Me – no agenda.

I will give you the desires of your heart.

Joy myth: Joy is a choice. While there are choices we can make that increase the odds of feeling joy, there is a simple fact that eliminates the idea that joy is a choice. Joy happens predominantly in the relational right hemisphere of the brain while choices and cognition happen in the left.... How can our choices help us move toward joy? Here are a few examples. We can choose to visit a friend who lights up to see us. We can choose to dwell on memories of relational joy. We can choose to spend time quieting and appreciating the good things in life.

23, 24, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Day 22 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Week Four's Reading assignment is pp. 33-46 of *Joyful Journey*.



Returning to JOY. Psalm 126:5 ESV
Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!

All of Psalm 126 is about restoration of joy, both those of the past and hope for future restoration. This is a powerful way to combat sorrow using past and future to effect the present:

[JJQ] When we experience God's comfort and help, we become aware of His presence, and peace is restored to us. Immanuel journaling is designed to take us through the sequence our brain uses to metabolize pain. Following the order our brain uses provides the simplest path from pain to redemption as well as nourishment for our souls.

Immanuel journaling leads us to a place of gratitude and where our RCs are restored and activated. In other words, Immanuel journaling is a tool that guides us through the pain processing pathway successfully. Ultimately, Immanuel journaling allows us to become aware of God's good, generous and tender presence in our lives, thus strengthening our iSight. 33, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories from your Golden Moments list. Invite God to share His reaction to joys you're recalling. See if you can identify His presence in those joys. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Jesus, You cried with Mary and Martha, grieving with them. Then You brought great joy by restoring their brother! Thank You now for restoration of joy in the past and for the future joys to be reaped as well. Amen.

Finding Joy

Returning to JOY.

2 Corinthians 6:10 ESV

*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
as poor, yet making many rich;
as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*

This quote from Paul follows his description of the hardships his teams faced in bringing the Gospel's good news to people like the Corinthians. These hardships affected his body, heart, and soul. But they were outweighed by the joys he was experiencing in the relationships and connections forged in Jesus Christ. Ponder the reality of the next comment:

[the] world is filled with people who struggle to make ends meet, have few opportunities for upward mobility, and even face persecution, but live with joy!

27, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Though sorrowful at times, I can always rejoice in You;
Though poor in spirit at times, I am rich in blessings,
possessing everything, forgiveness and grace, mercy
and peace included. Thank You Jesus. Amen.

One of the reasons for telling joy stories related to shame is to give our brain a clear picture of what it looks like to handle the emotion like an adult so we can feel it but not be overwhelmed by it.

130, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

— *Finding Joy* —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[JJQ] Immanuel journaling expects that God not only listens to our prayers but also initiates conversations with us. God knows when we are unable to come to Him either because we are overwhelmed by our pain or because we are hiding from Him in fear. Just as He initiated the conversation with Adam and Eve when they were hiding, we believe that God approaches us, thus initiating our restoration because God is love. In Immanuel journaling, we thought rhyme as God describes our experiences to us. We write down what we perceive. Thought rhyming is a *God speaking to me* approach. 34, JJ, WKLL



Psalm 71:23 NIV *My lips will sing with joy when I make music to praise you. My soul, which you have rescued, also will sing joyfully.*



Before my lips go quiet tonight for rest, let my soul sing with joy and make music to praise you. My soul, which you have rescued time and again, is grateful.

*Now the light has gone away;
Father, listen while I pray,
Asking Thee to watch and keep
And to send me quiet sleep.*

*Now my evening praise I give;
Thou didst die that I might live.
All my blessings come from Thee;
Oh, how good Thou art to me!*

*Now
The Light
Has
Gone Away*

Lutheran
Service
Book
887, st. 1,4



[Father] Thank You My child. Now rest – let Me bless you with sleep as one of those I love (Psalm 127:2b).

Day 23 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Building JOY.

Isaiah 9:3 NIV *You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.”*

We return to this quote from Isaiah that anticipates the arrival of the Messiah Jesus – a light for the Gentiles and the glory His people Israel. Part of His becoming a man was to experience what we go through (attuning to our situations): Hebrews 4:15: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.*

[JJQ] In his book, *Outsmarting Yourself*, Karl Lehman emphasizes how receiving attunement helps restore our RC function. He explains that we will feel seen, heard, understood, and cared for when successful attunement (a mutual-mind state) takes place. We no longer feel alone. Immanuel journaling is based upon the conviction that God offers His children perfect attunement as a good parent does whenever relationship is needed. 35, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God’s presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you’re recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



[Jesus] To increase your joy – an abundant-harvest level of joy – I took on flesh and bone. This made my sacrifice death effectual. I see you. I hear you, I understand your situation. I am with you. I can help.

— Finding Joy —

Building JOY.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 *For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.*

[JJQ] Thought rhyming takes participants through five steps from God's perspective as God offers attunement to His children. In distress, God helps us restore our RCs and peace. Through the Immanuel journaling process, God brings healing to the broken interactions (mis-attunement) we experienced in life. Suppose we need to start our thought rhyming while we are feeling upset about something; we can use the following sequence.

1. I see you
2. I can hear you
3. I can understand how hard this is for you.
4. I am glad to be with you
5. I can do something about what you're going through.

(Thought rhyming instructions found on pages 36-44 of joyful journey) 35, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Let it please You Father God to give us wisdom and knowledge and joy. We are no longer identified by our sinfulness (“sinners”) but as Your chosen and holy ones – “saints.” Thank You for saving us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Finding Joy

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week.
Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for
and then write down how Jesus might respond.



Worship
JOY!

1 Kings 8:66 ESV *On the eighth day he (Solomon) sent the people away, and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people.*

This joy event was the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, consecrated as part of the Festival of Tabernacles that year. High joy encompassed the community. Our bodies, brains included, are temples of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Jim Wilder contends we can share mutual-minds states with God (because we have the mind of Christ). This enables us to experience the *thought poetry* described in *Joyful Journey*.

[JJQ] Jim Wilder explains that there is a control center on the right side of the brain with four different levels (Wilder, 2004). This control center contains the system Karl Lehman later named the relational circuits (RCs). The control center is where we find the mutual-mind states that create “thought poetry...” The main function of the control center in our right brain is to handle emotions and social interactions. Handling emotions and social interactions maturely is what we have called “suffering well.” The control center also contains our joyful identity that grows through relationship and practice in joy. 34, JJ, WKLL



Jesus, I re-consecrate my body-temple to You. I hail You as my King and welcome You into my heart and home, my relationships and responsibilities. Amen.

Day 24 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Returning
to **JOY.**

John 16:22 NIV *So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.*


This “Returning to Joy” verse is found in Jesus’ conversation with the disciples the night of His arrest. They were in sorrow over His words about departure. Jesus Himself was in great sorrow that night (Matthew 26:38). But He faced that sorrow by connecting with His Father in prayer. That connection gave Jesus confidence knowing that His Father would take care of Him through the difficult events ahead of Him – all the way thorough the resurrection. That is why, for the joy set before Him, He could endure the cross.

[JJQ] Can you imagine how different life would be if we came to the place where we could confidently face all our troubles and trials without getting stuck because we are connected (attached) to our Father who shares this experience with us? This is what Jesus modeled for us over and over again. 37, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God’s presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you’re recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus] I know your sorrows. So does Father. We have not left you alone. We also know your joys. Let no one take them from you – particularly your joy over Us! I attached you to Father who shares all of your experience with you. Stand strong with Us!

— Finding Joy —

Returning to JOY.

Psalm 90:14 NIV *Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.*

The *Prayer of Moses* psalm is quoted above. We don't have enough space to describe the attachment God built with His people in the desert wanderings. They suffered hardships, but God stayed with them even when He was unhappy with their behavior. Returning to joy from hard situations is much easier when we are securely attached to God, believing that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

[JQQ from **Synchronizing our brain with God, Step One**]

The sequence of Immanuel journaling, a *God to me* approach, reassures our Level 1 brain that we are securely attached to God and that He is glad to be with us even if we are not feeling happy with Him. 37, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.
In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

We call the right orbital prefrontal cortex "the joy center" partly because it is easier to say, but also because it grows with the experience of relational joy. The area of the brain that houses a well-developed joy center can expand to fill up nearly a third of the brain.

39, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[JJQ] When we are overwhelmed by negative emotions that are beyond our level 3 capacity, we temporarily lose the relational connection to God and/or others in community and become non-relational. In other words, our RCs get turned off and we find ourselves feeling alone as if stranded on an island as the big six emotions overwhelm us. When God joins us on this island and shares our emotions, our level 3 brain re-establishes relational connection to Him and others. 38, JJ, WKLL



Father God, I rejoice that You join me in my negative emotions. Help me learn to bring my emotions to You – and to brothers and sisters in Christ who can help me also. As I take refuge in You, let Your Holy Spirit lead me to times of refreshment and joy. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



Psalm 5:11 ESV *But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.*

Appreciation trains the attention system in our brains to scan for the good stuff in life and pay attention to joyful things. Fear trains our brain to focus on ways to minimize the danger in our lives yet abandons joy and amplifies damage control. 76, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Day 25 of Finding Joy in the Journey



Proverbs 15:23 ESV

*To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,
and a word in season, how good it is!*


An “apt answer” can bring great joy – or relief – depending on the situation. An apt answer from God should also stir great joy in us. But how can we trust hearing from God? Consider this question the authors addressed in *Joyful Journey*:

[JJQ] Isn't Immanuel journaling putting words in God's mouth? I learned that only God can only speak through the Bible. Can I write down bible verses as God's responses? In Immanuel journaling we can only be sure that we are writing our thoughts. The closer those thoughts come to God's thoughts, the more shalom exists. From Satan's temptation of Jesus (Mathew 4:1ff), we learn that not even quoting scripture will guarantee us God's thoughts. When we read scripture we also see its meaning through the thick glasses of what those words mean to us. If we limit what God can say to us through scripture, then God can never lead us to Boston (as an example) as Boston is not in any Bible texts. 69, *JJ, WKLL*

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus] Remember when I told Satan, “Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God?” It is not just to feed you, but to encourage you and build you up in joy – together. Dig in.

— Finding Joy —

Building JOY.

Colossians 1:11 ESV *May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.*

With the Colossians, Paul is praying that followers of Jesus learn to handle life not in one's own strength, but in the strength that God gives. His strength is a might that comes with glory and joy. Tuning into God rather than turning into ourselves is a much better plan, according to Paul.


[JJQ from **Synchronizing our brain with God, Step two**]

This step (being heard) is focused on perceiving the fact that God hears all our thoughts. He is allowing us to experience being truly listened to instead of having us experience correction or teaching. In order to stay relationally connected, we must experience being heard.
39, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



 [Jesus] It is Our desire to strengthen you with Our mighty power so that you don't have to do things according to your own strength. We can help you live with joy as you learn endurance and patience under our Spirit's leadership. Lean into your fellow disciples as well. That has been Our plan from the beginning.

Most of us know there is a gap between the level of joy. We experience and the level of joy we desire the good news. Is? There are exercises included in this book that have a proven track record of helping people grow their joy.

178, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

— Finding Joy —

Worship JOY.

1 Samuel 2:1 NIV (Hannah prayer)
*My heart rejoices in the LORD;
my horn is lifted up by the LORD.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.*


[JJQ] Spiritual maturity grows when we develop the habit of creating space where we can reflect on our lives. Regularly practicing Immanuel journaling is asking one simple question, "Jesus, is there anything You want me to know about this situation?" As we attempt to listen, we are increasing our awareness of God's presence as His peace guides our lives. 44, 45, JJ, WKLL

Let Eli's mother Hannah inspire your time of gratitude this evening. She rejoiced over being heard by God in prayer.

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



 My heart rejoices in You LORD. My horn – a symbol of strength – is my connection to You LORD. My mouth boasts not in my strength but in Yours; I rejoice not in "my salvation," but in "Your salvation." I trust in You and not myself. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

The only way to overcome a bad habit is to build a good one to take its place in a sense. Life consists of the habits we develop so it is worth taking the time to do the exercises in this book in order to build habits that transform our lives from the inside out.

175, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

Day 26 of Finding Joy in the Journey

**God's
JOY.**

Matthew 25:21 NIV *His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."*


This parable from Jesus includes a master's validation of his servants efforts – and leads to mutual joy for both master and servant. That joy is equated to God's desire to share His joy with us! But validation is not limited to our service. Validation of our emotions is another very powerful experience. Today's material reminds us of the power of validation.

Validation requires accuracy about the size of our reaction and not agreement about the cause. We must always validate the actual size of our reactions and not try to resize our emotions into what we wish they were. Validation gets the size right. Now the executive control center can take over and handle this event relationally in the way that rhymes with how God sees me. 40-41, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus] I look forward to helping you "right-size" your emotions and your reactions to them. Learning to handle your emotions makes you a better servant as you invest in the people around you. That brings joy to everyone – included Me: contagious joy!

————— *Finding Joy* —————

God's JOY.

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV) *Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

Here is a second quote about validation. Just as God knew the situation with the people of Nehemiah's day, He knows what's up with us too. They grieved because of personal and corporate failures in the eyes of God. But God's grace won the day then – and still does now.

[From **Synchronizing our brain with God, Step three**]


We minimize our apparently minor trials, compared to the perceived bigger challenges of others. We do this to ourselves and to others. God however sees, hears, knows and understands why a particular issue is so big for us. God knows our history. No matter how insightful a therapist may be or wise a friend is, only God can ultimately know the intricacies of our lives and experiences. His eyes never leave us, and He knows us better than we know ourselves. Validation moves mental experiences toward resolution by accurately stating their "size," that is to say, intensity and impact. Without validation, we will not be comforted.

Comfort follows validation and gives us peace. 40, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



 [Jesus] Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks; share some with those who have nothing prepared. It'll be a great surprise. Celebrate this day as holy to our Lord. Don't grieve too much over your sin – Let My joy over You set the tone for your day.

— *Finding Joy* —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



One final piece on validation. This is great when helping other navigate emotional challenges.

Here is a simple thought strategy that can help you tell yourself the truth as you quiet upsetting emotions.

We call it **VCR** – Validate, Comfort, Recover.

Validate: Tell yourself the truth about how you are feeling. Give it a name. Identify how big it is.

Comfort: Tell yourself the truth about how to Handle your emotion and ask. “What do I need when I feel this way?”

Recover: This is not so much a step in the process as a sign that the process has worked. I no longer feel overwhelmed but can remain relational and act like myself despite how I feel.

57,58, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey



1 Chronicles 16:27 NIV (David gives thanks)
*Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his dwelling place.*



I borrow from King David’s Psalm of Thanks:
Splendor and majesty are before You God;
strength and joy are in Your dwelling place.

I give you the glory due Your name!

I bring this prayer time as an offering –
An offering of worship and praise in Jesus’ name
Amen.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Day 27 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Repentant
JOY. Luke 15:7 NIV *I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.*

Repentant Joy is something we see in the bible – as we read above. David wrote about it. Jesus celebrated it. There is shame involved in this joy, but that is good. Not all shame is bad. That said, shame left to itself is stifling – even deadly. Here is a simple quote about shame’s impact on us:

The feeling of shame triggers the vagus nerve network in the back of our neck so that we instinctively drop our heads. This is why encouraging someone can sometimes be referred to as “lifting their head.” It is a sign that you are not ashamed of them and want to help them feel like themselves again. 55, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God’s presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you’re recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



Jesus, help me return to joy from shame by knowing that honest repentance bring You joy, brings Father God joy, brings heaven joy. Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Repentant JOY.

Psalm 30:11 ESV *You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness*

You may have been shamed by others when you messed up, but God wants to keep you close.

[JJQ From **Synchronizing our brain with God, Step four**]

Whether we feel connected to God or not, none of our weaknesses keep Him away. In God's presence, we are transformed. In step 4 you will write God's confirmation of His love for you by hearing Him say, "I am glad to be with you, my child." Write what you perceive God might be saying to you in a kind, tender and loving way... We let God help us return to joy in steps 3 and 4 of thought rhyming. The way that Jesus helped Peter is a good illustration. Jesus seemed to know how big it was for Peter to have denied him three times (John 21). Peter felt defeated and hopelessly retreated back to fishing even after he knew of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus found Peter and invited him back three times in parallel to Peter's three denials. Peter was restored once he experienced that Jesus still wanted Him in spite of His weakness. Once we return to joy with God's help we can live as His children.

42-43, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Immanuel, with Your help I can return to joy from my weaknesses. You can turn my mourning into dancing; and clothe me with gladness. Bring that joy! Amen.

— Finding Joy —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



Joy gives us energy, hope, and the ability to express our love. Joy is what brings us together and invigorates us to look forward to our day. 9 *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

As you conclude one day and look forward to another, end this one in worshipful joy and prepare for tomorrow to full of hope and energy as you rejoice in the Lord.

**Worship
JOY!**

Psalm 98:4-9 NIV *Sing for joy to the Lord, all the earth; praise him with songs and shouts of joy! Sing praises to the Lord! Play music on the harps! Blow trumpets and horns, and shout for joy to the Lord, our king. Roar, sea, and every creature in you; sing, earth, and all who live on you! Clap your hands, you rivers; you hills, sing together with joy before the Lord, because he comes to rule the earth. He will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness.*



I am joining the earth in singing for joy, Lord;
I praise You with words (songs and shouts?) of joy!
No harp, no trumpet, no horn – just me and You.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Learning to practice appreciation and reflecting on joy from our past trains our brain to expect joy in the future.

79, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Day 28 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Contagious JOY. Luke 1:13-15 NIV *But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.”*

When God showed up for Zechariah, the priest had a hard time integrating the news in light of his difficult past. He is not alone in these types of struggles:

[JJQ] Many of us do not know how to process our mistakes and failures with God, and that is why we tend to get stuck in our pain. We can review our painful events or memory in a safe way through Immanuel journaling, and it can give us wisdom and compassion for ourselves and others. 44

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God’s presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you’re recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



It's story TIME In honor of Zechariah’s muted story-telling episode of being overwhelmed, let’s highlight the power of story-telling in general:

One of the most important habits we can form is that of storytelling. We are specifically referred to sharing brain-friendly “joy stories.” These are practiced tales of times we faced upsetting emotions without getting overwhelmed or times we got overwhelmed initially but we’re able to recover collecting such stories constructs a framework for resilience in our brains. 21, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Contagious Luke 1:44 NIV *As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.*
JOY.

Try to picture the scene between Mary and Elizabeth, between two babies of the pregnant women. Both women are miraculously with child. Elizabeth's son John – still “in utero” – kicks at the presence of the Savior Jesus. That is way beyond thought-rhyming. And its our joy verse of the day!

[JJQ from **Synchronizing our brain with God, Step Five**]

In step 5 of thought rhyming, we write down what God might be saying to us about how He will be with us and help us. We may be reminded of God's faithfulness in the past and given hope of His continuing work in, around and through us. Scripture quotes and stories often come to mind during this time. Sometimes we find God asking us to do the difficult and hard work living as His children. While reminding us of who we are, God invites us to live according to our true heart. The promise of His constant presence, His unfailing love and His pure goodness will sustain us. Write your impression of what God is offering you.
43, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Whose presence makes you “leap for joy?” Take time to celebrate those people with God. Then thank God that He lights up to see you. If you are so moved, tell those individuals (who leap for joy over you) how much you appreciate them.

— Finding Joy —

Worship JOY.

Matthew 2:10 NIV (recalling the Wise Men of the Christmas story) *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.*

Just what you've been waiting for – Game time! Before your Gratitude time, check this out:

To help you practice getting your mind into a joyful place, we encourage people to play “the joy GAME.” GAME represents four practices to help us focus on what we have to appreciate.

G Gratitude: anything in our present situation worth appreciating.

A Anticipation. It is helpful to have something to anticipate with joy.

M Memories: Past experiences that made us smile and bring us joy.

E Experiences: Activities that we enjoy. Done with others, our joy will multiply.

84-87, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



And now, a note about traumas of the past that disturb us:

[JJQ] Traumas, in general, contain the memory of pain without a memory of God's presence (Lehman, 2011).

These traumas become blockages to our own maturity.

Immanuel journaling can be used as a tool to facilitate the process of healing. The recognition of God's presence in each traumatic memory makes it no longer traumatic, but healing and hopeful. 44, *JJ, WKLL*

When we can see God in a traumatic event of the past, He can bring joy and healing into it. This is one facet of Immanuel Journaling that can free us up to celebrate life again – and maybe, like the Wise Men, rejoice with exceedingly great joy!

Day 29 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Week Four+'s Reading assignment is pp. 47-59 of *Joyful Journey*. The FAQs at the end of the book have been filtered in.



Contagious Philemon 1:7 NIV
JOY. *Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.*


As we have looked at the nuances of joy as an experience, here is another wrinkle to that: Just think about someone you enjoy and reflect on how you feel when you are with this person – that's joy! (10, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey)

[JJQ Describing the **Listener** of journal entries] When we are listening to others read their interactions with God, we are offering them joy. The Bible clearly speaks of the wisdom of listening. By listening without interrupting, we participate in God's work by creating a sacred space for people to encounter themselves, their community and God.... We rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). We celebrate with those who are growing, conversing with God and discovering practical ways to live the gospel. 49, *JJ*, *WKLL*

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus] Let your mutual love grow for each other – at church, home and beyond. Draw joy, inspiration and refreshment from each other. Doing so brings Us joy.

— Finding Joy —

Contagious 2 Corinthians 7:13 NIV *By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.*

JOY.

Many of us find joy when people make our friends and family happy. Such was the case for Paul regarding Titus. We like it when relationships are going well with loved ones:

[JJQ] Immanuel journaling helps all relationships, and especially intimate connections in our lives. If we are married or have children, we understand that the daily grind of tasks versus nurturing relationships is hard to balance. An unbalanced life takes a toll on our work performance, health, children, academic pursuits and family. When conflict develops, we are usually directed to work on communication. We attempt to restore peace using communication skills. How effective is that? When we turn to others hoping that communicating will restore our peace, the road can be a little rough. When we use Immanuel journaling with God to restore our peace before we communicate with others, it can give us strength and wisdom. Many misunderstandings can benefit from slowing down and talking to God about our own fears and triggers. Once we have shalom inside, the referee of God's Spirit (Colossians 3:15) allows us to return to talking to others. Now we are sharing our peace instead of searching for it. 45, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence "thoughts" in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



Lord, I pray for joyful refreshment: For me, for my family, for my pastor and church family, and for my friends.

— *Finding Joy* —

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



“Joy gets amplified as it is shared,” wrote authors Warner and Coursey in *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People* (p. 84). Let’s see how Immanuel journaling might help amplify that.

The benefits of sharing the experiences that bring us peace, as Immanuel journaling does, are profound for both the reader and listener. Let us examine the top three:

- Sharing our Immanuel journaling entry can amplify joy and peace in us and in others who listen to our entry
- Sharing our Immanuel journaling entry can help us to form three-way family bonds and develop a group identity as God’s children
- Sharing our Immanuel journaling entry can help us to integrate misplaced or misunderstood parts of our story into a coherent and redemptive life story. 50, JJ, WKLL



Psalm 81:1 NIV

*Sing for joy to God our strength;
make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob.*



Thank You, Father God for strength, to make it through the day. I commend all things and people to Your care. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Joy makes us healthier people more and more research is supporting what we have likely already suspected just as stress is harmful to our physical health so happiness especially relational happiness which we call joy Has a positive effect. 11, *The 4 Habits*, Warner, Coursey

Day 30 of Finding Joy in the Journey

Contagious 1 John 1:4 ESV
JOY. *And we are writing these things
so that our joy may be complete.*


We have reached day thirty. Well done. A few final thoughts from the books we've drawn from:

[JJQ] When we practice Immanuel journaling with a trusted group, we start connecting with God and others at the same time. This is a real and delightful way to form a group identity as God's children. As we rhyme thoughts with God, a space is created within us to become attuned with others. When we listen to a journal entry read aloud, we become the third person in the three-way bond as we enjoy the bond between the reader and God. When it is our turn to read, others enjoy our mutual-mind with God. 51, JJ, WKLL

Session A: We continue revisiting joyful memories recorded on your Golden Moments list. Look for God's presence in the joys. Invite Him to share thoughts about joys you're recalling. Again, notice body sensations, attitudes, heart rate, etc.

Practice seeing God in the present and past joys



 [Jesus thought] Would you consider keeping us the writing these things to further our mutual joy?

The woman at the well was amazed that Jesus knew her better than she knew herself and went to tell everybody in her village about Him. She overcame her shame about her life while sharing about a God who was good, kind and loving. Her joy and hope brought the whole village back to taste what she had experienced. It is our responsibility and privilege to tell others about our gratitude for God's power in our lives.

48, 49, JJ, WKLL

— Finding Joy —



2 John 1:12 ESV *Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.*

Reading your journal is powerful. Doing so face to face adds to the depth of connection:

[JJQ] The final step of reading our Immanuel journaling aloud brings harmony deep within our hearts, minds and souls. Reading aloud is a simple step that takes our experiences to another level. Some people might be tempted to skip this step since their interaction with God in writing brought so much relief that they feel better. Nevertheless, when people read aloud their interaction with God, an integrative and a restorative experience takes place. Reading aloud can take what was experienced alone into the presence of love and compassion from others. When we read aloud, we blend the words of the left brain with the emotional experience of the right brain. Therefore, reading aloud has benefits for us internally and externally. The community also becomes a chorus that amplifies all the good outcomes of the Immanuel journaling experience. As things begin to fit together, we feel shalom that is amplified as we speak and others listen. 48, JJ, WKLL

Session B: Thought Rhyming as Immanuel Journaling:

Take one or two of your joys from today (or your list) and envision God responding with one or two sentence “thoughts” in the following areas: I see, hear you, understand you, am glad to be with you, and can do something about your situation.



[JJQ] When we take time to read our Immanuel journaling entries to trusted people, it allows us to hear for ourselves the conversation we had with God. We overcome shame about our weaknesses by reading aloud in community how God sees us. Others can amplify the joy and peace our time with God produced in us. In this way, we are sharing the love that we have received from God. 48, JJ, WKLL



Lord Jesus, I pray for a few trusted brothers and sisters to join me in the journey of Immanuel journaling. Let us spur one another on in love and good deeds. Amen.

Merely pleasurable experiences don't create lasting joy. They are fun in the moment and then they are over. Satisfying experiences create a feeling of pleasure we can revisit again and again. The feeling lasts over time.
172, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

Finding Joy

Session C: Reflecting with Interactive Gratitude:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the day or week. Journal a sentence about what you are grateful for and then write down how Jesus might respond.



[there] is a universal angst most people experience as they look for a way to fill the longing in their hearts. Many of these people experience joy now and then but know there is still something missing. We have seen many people searching for an answer to this longing find what they are looking for in a relationship with Jesus. From this perspective, the worldview of Christianity is especially suited to help people live with joy and peace. It offers a solution to shame through the forgiveness of sins. It offers a solution to the fear of death through the promise of eternal life. It offers hope in times of despair and a God whose love cannot be measured.

155, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey

**Worship
JOY.**

Isaiah 61:10 ESV *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*



I greatly rejoice in You Lord; my soul exults in having You as my God. You clothe me with garments of salvation – a robe of righteousness. Thank You for treasuring me – us as your people.

In numbers 6 we read that every day the high priest of Israel was to pray this blessing on his people.

May the Lord bless you and keep you;

May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you

May the Lord lift his face to you and give you peace

If you think about it when someone's face shines upon us, it is because they are happy to see us. When someone lifts their face toward us, it means they see us and are happy to be with us. This is our hope for you too.

179, The 4 Habits, Warner, Coursey



*I give everyone and everything to You God;
I give everyone and everything to You.*

Joy-Centered Books to Consider Digesting

- *The Bible* – read from the perspective that life is about a secure attachment to God and others (or its absence) and founded on the spiritual fruit of love, joy and peace.
- *Joy Starts Here the transformation zone*, Wilder Khouri Coursey Sutton A guide to building relational joy and resilience in your home, school (work) and church community based upon neuroscience and spiritual principles.
- *The Other Half of Church*, Wilder, Hendricks Why does true Christian transformation seem fleeting? And why does church often feel lonely, Christian community shallow, and leaders untrustworthy? For many Christians, the delight of encountering Christ eventually dwindles—and disappointment sets in. Is lasting joy possible? These are some of the questions Michel Hendricks has considered both in his experience as a spiritual formation pastor and in his lifetime as a Christian. He began to find answers when he met Jim Wilder—a neurotheologian. Using brain science, Wilder identified that there are two halves of the church: the rational half and the relational half. And when Christians only embrace the rational half, churches become unhealthy places where transformation doesn't last and narcissistic leaders flourish. In *The Other Half of Church*, join Michel and Jim's journey as they couple brain science with the Bible to identify how to overcome spiritual stagnation by living a full-brained faith. You'll also learn the four ingredients necessary to develop and maintain a vibrant transformational community where spiritual formation occurs, relationships flourish, and the toxic spread of narcissism is eradicated.
- *Joyful Journey* Wilder Coursey, Kang Loppnow, Loppnow Experiencing God's presence brings healing, peace and connection. Like any other relationship, experiencing God's presence takes practice. Immanuel journaling is based on scripture and neuroscience and simple to learn.

- *Transforming Fellowship (19 Brain Skills that Build Joyful Community) Coursey*
 paired with
Relational Skills of the Bible Brown and Coursey
 Relational brain skills change our lives and transform our relationships. Learn the 19 critical relational skills needed for resilience, peace and joy in every family and community. The Bible and brain science combine to show us active solutions we ordinarily overlook for personal and corporate transformation. Transforming Fellowship tackles the central issue that is destroying the credibility of the Western Church. Our fellowship lacks the transforming power Jesus intended. Through Transforming Fellowship we each actively contribute part of Christ's character to one another. How we think, live and react changes at a basic brain level. Transforming Fellowship develops both deep love and relational skills. Transforming Fellowship is as deeply spiritual as it is practical.
- *Renovated* (so named from *Renovation of the Heart*, written by Dallas Willard) Wilder Christianity tends to focus on beliefs and choices as the keys for personal growth. But biblical evidence and modern brain science tell a different story. Combining faith with the latest developments in neuroscience and psychology, *Renovated* offers a groundbreaking and refreshing perspective of how our attachment to God impacts our minds and hearts. You'll find that our spiritual growth is about more than just what we believe—it's about who we love.
- *The Complete Guide to Living with Men* Living with Men combines both the latest science and the oldest wisdom for training the control center in a man's brain for relationships. Immature men create leadership, parenting and relational failures, leaving deep pain in children, couples, families, churches, communities and themselves.

- *The Four Habits of Joy-Filled People*, Warner, Coursey
- *The Four Habits of Joy-Filled Kids*
- *The Four Habits of Joy-Filled Marriages* Are some people just born happy? Most of us grew up thinking that joy is random and fleeting, instead of something we can actually count on or build our life around. But brain science has revealed that joy is the perfect word to describe the fuel on which our brains run. So how do we live a joy-filled life? Marcus Warner and Chris Coursey show us how to build habits that fill our lives with greater joy and satisfaction. Based on the latest neuroscience and attachment theory—but written in everyday language—*The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People* is practical and easy to comprehend. The authors provide exercises and tools you can put into practice immediately. Joy is possible. It doesn't have to be a random experience that catches you off guard now and then. Some of the most joyful people have endured unbelievable trauma.
- *The Joy Switch*, Coursey Why do we sometimes feel more connected in our relationships than at other times? Perhaps you sometimes find it easy and exciting to spend time with your loved ones—but sometimes, especially when things don't go according to plan, you feel incapable of connecting in conversations. You then feel distant from those you love most. What if the answer to remaining connected in relationships has been right under your nose—or, rather, right inside your head all along? Discover the simple switch in your brain that activates—or deactivates—what you most need for relational connectivity: joy. In *The Joy Switch*, learn how the simple flip of this brain switch either enables you to remain present for those around you or causes you to become overwhelmed—and ultimately inhibited from being your best self—when problems arise. You'll learn how to maximize your relational brain, how to recognize when your brain's joy switch is flipped, and how to take steps to restore your relational sweet-spot. This book will help you love others and remain fully connected with yourself while being the best version of who you were made to be.

- *Joy-Fueled: catalyzing a Revolution of Joyful Communities*
White, Daniels, Smith Are you tired of being spiritually overfed yet under-nourished? Are you worn out by all the things you “should” be doing? Are you burned out on religion and wanting to bring more connection and participation to conventional church? Or, are you one of the 65 million people in the United States alone who are “Done” with church as they know it searching for how to better engage as an organic church, simple church, or house church? Do you want to accept Jesus’ invitation to “get away with him and recover your life”? This revolutionary and yet practical book addresses the causes of burnout many Christians face and empowers them to join God in a joy-fueled movement of Jesus! Vibrancy and joy are what Christians are promised. Yet, many have experienced the opposite: a guilt-ridden, duty-based, judgmental culture that has left them still searching for the life Jesus promised. Perhaps you find yourself trying to effect true life change, but feeling discouraged, tired, overwhelmed, and losing hope? Done with investing your life in a system that is not producing sustainable transformation in yourself or those you serve? Leaving conventional church altogether feeling discouraged, lonely, hurt, frustrated or apathetic? Searching for how to better engage as an organic church, simple church, or house church? What is joy and why it is a superior fuel for motivation. The harmful effects of using substitute “fuels” that leave us discouraged and burned out. How you can nurture joy in yourself and your church (whatever form that might take). How mission can be a spontaneous explosion of joy. In Joy Fueled, you will discover three practices that inspire hope to build the joy necessary to go the distance, foster mature relationships with others and with God, and overflow into a life of mission.