

Day 5

*Joy*

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."* Romans 14:17-18

**Discussion** Paul has just written about disagreements in the Church regarding what is and is not acceptable to eat. He said, *"Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."* (Rom. 14:13) In the above passage he then redirects their attention to what the Kingdom of God really is, *"righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."* In writing to the Church at Thessalonica, Paul says, *"And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit..."* (1Th. 1:6) In both of these verses, joy is associated not with rules about eating, our possessions, our accomplishments, or circumstances, but with the Holy Spirit. Joy is experienced in our relationship with the living Holy Spirit. *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth....But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you."* (Jn. 14:15-17) *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* (Jn. 14:26) *"But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you."* (Jn. 16:13-15) *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."* (Rom. 8:26-27) The Holy Spirit lives in us, reminds us of what Jesus said, and intercedes for us. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in relationship with each other and working together for our good. Much of this is a mystery to us. Intellectually, we probably understand very little of it, but we experience it. We experience the love and work of a real Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in our lives. And in our relationship with Them, in the Kingdom of God, there is joy.

**Application** There is joy in the simplicity of the Christian life! Because of the Holy Spirit's work in us, we don't have to worry about specifics, only how we serve God. Consider how everything you do today can be done to serve God. When we consciously choose to serve God in all that we do, the Holy Spirit's joy will fill our lives. Make it your goal today to notice that joy in everything you do!

**Prayer** Holy Spirit, thank You for Your work in me. Thank You that You remind me of Jesus' words and You intercede for me. Thank You that You live in me and will be with me forever. Thank You that I belong to God's Kingdom and that a very natural part of that is the joy of You, being guided and taught by You. This is so far beyond my understanding, but I know that I am blessed. Thank You. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"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."* Hebrews 12:2b-3