

Day 9

*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** *"The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing."* Proverbs 10:28

**Discussion** Who are the righteous? They are those who trust God and therefore choose to obey Him. To have an intellectual acknowledgement of God's existence is not enough. To have ethical behavior is not enough. God is real, alive, personal, and King. To ignore this is to ignore reality, to pretend that life is not what it really is. To ignore God's existence or His expectations is to deny reality, to be foolish by living in a fantasy. Pinning one's life and hopes on a fantasy result in nothing. To recognize the reality of God's existence and His goodness, and to live out His expectations is to live in harmony with reality; and results in living in the joy of knowing God. *"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."* (Romans 8:5-8). Abraham had (and still has) a living relationship with God. He committed himself to obey God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac, while trusting God's promise that he would have children through Isaac, by believing God would raise Isaac from the dead. This was faith in God's existence and goodness, expressed in action and *"This is why it was credited to him as righteousness"* (Romans 4:22) by God, though Abraham was a person of sin like all the rest of us. When we acknowledge the reality of God's existence, live in relationship with Him, and obey Him we live in reality, are regarded by God as righteous and have the joy of being close to God. *"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* (John 15:9-11).

**Application** Before the end of the day tell someone you trust what God has taught you lately about joy.

**Prayer** Father, I praise You that You are good, kind, and generous. Thank You Jesus, that You love me and have taken the punishment I deserve for my sin, so that I may be reconciled to the Father. Thank You that You allow me to find You, to know You, and to be regarded as righteous. Father, I commit myself to follow and obey You. Thank You for the joy You provide when I follow You and am close to 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: *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31