



BREAKING THE ICE

What's a fun summertime activity you had as a kid?

What is one thing that has brought you joy this summer?

MAIN CONTENT

This week we heard from our friend and Pastor Derwin Gray about how to dial in joy.

Pastor Derwin talked about a game he played as a kid where he chased his shadow. He made the illustration that chasing your shadow is like chasing your happiness.

1. How have you been chasing happiness in your life?

Happiness and joy we are created for can be beyond our feelings and having good things happen to us. What we do on the outside can not fix us on the inside. For example: an event can not fix our joy, that's temporary.

2. What event or experience have you been looking to fill you with joy? Has it worked?

Pastor Derwin talked about putting his joy, happiness and expectations in what football could do for him. He worshipped football thinking it would bring him affirmation, identity and purpose. But, Jesus calls us to worship Him. Through our worship of Him, we will find true joy and happiness.

3. What do you worship thinking it will bring you the joy only Jesus can bring?

Read Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)

4. Which of the beatitudes do you need to focus on the most? Which one have you experienced God in?

Pastor Derwin focused on Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." If we want to experience the joy God created for us, we go up by

admitting we are down. We can't be full of Jesus when we are full of ourselves. We have to humble ourselves and let God know we need Him.

Jesus came for the spiritually bankrupt. We are more messed up than we realize but we are more loved than we realize. Grace and the kingdom of God are for those who say "God I can't, but you can".

5. When is the last time you totally surrendered everything to God?

God's kingdom is for those who need Him. When we have an ego we are edging God out. We have to change the meaning of ego from Edging God Out to Exalting God Only.

We have to be poor in spirit to know that we need God in our lives. When we come humbly to Him, pure and real joy comes.

6. Where have you experienced real joy after giving something over to God?

The more we are following Christ and need Him, we become more like Him. Holiness means we take on the life of Christ. And the more we become holy like Him, we see that happiness is based on our faithfulness to God who has called us and loves us, not on temporary things.

Read Ephesians 2:1-5

What you notice in verse 4 is "But God". Nothing affects God, His mercy, His love will never change.

Jesus does not need us to be a co-pilot. We need His help.

7. Describe a "But God" moment with your group.

God can do all things. When we focus on Him, He brings us true joy and happiness. Happiness that leads to holiness in which we join Jesus in loving others well so they will know Him.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you Lord for your word. Thank you for the reminder of your love for us. Will you help us be poor in spirit so we can be rich in Jesus. Will you help us rely on you for our joy and stop worshiping other things and being dependent on them to give us joy. In Jesus name, Amen.

ACTION STEP

- + Take some time this week to write down the things you worship above God.
- + Take some time this week to ask God where you are seeking happiness instead of his holiness.
- + Pray about these things, give them to God. Have a friend or group member commit to praying with you and keep each other accountable to seek holiness instead of temporary happiness.