

**Message Study Guide**

(Scriptures & quotes from this week's message are available on [thorncreek.church/live](http://thorncreek.church/live))

**Warming up**

1. When was the last time you laughed...a full belly laugh, tears rolling down your cheeks kind of laugh?

**Digging Deeper & Application**

Take your time reading the scripture given. If possible look up the verses in different versions and pause at each verse and discuss it.

2. What is the difference between happiness, joy, and rejoice? Look up definitions!
  
3. Please read Luke 2:8-10. Why would the coming of Jesus bring joy to people?
  - a. Compare this verse to Isaiah 9:1-3.
  
4. There was a study done by Natural Church Development (Christian Schwartz). He studied 1,000 churches from different denominations and looked at why churches grow. This was part of his findings." Growing churches possess on the average a measurably higher "love quotient" than stagnant or declining churches. Additionally, it can be shown that there is a significant connection between "laughter in the church" and that church's qualitative and numerical growth. As a result, there is a lot of love, joy and laughter in growing churches." Surprised? Why or why not?
  
5. According to Nehemiah 8:10, what does God have that He wants to put inside of you?
  - a. How does it impact you?
  
  - b. Compare with John 15:9-11, and Romans 14:17.

6. Please read about the Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. What does this mean to you?
  
7. What are your thoughts about this quote from Dallas Willard? “The Fruits of the Spirit are not feelings, they are conditions of an entire person. It is stable across circumstances.” Thoughts? How are we more focused on creating a feeling rather than a condition.
  
8. John Ortberg shared four ways to make your life miserable.  
    “If you want to make your life miserable, wait till your circumstances are just right.”  
    “If you want to make your life miserable, compare yourself to other people.  
    If you want to make your life miserable, do it alone.  
    If you want to make your life miserable, adopt pessimism as a life orientation.  
    a. Can you relate to any of them?
  
9. According to Psalm 32:1-2, what is one way to generate joy?
  - a. Compare with James 1:2-3, and Isaiah 9:3, and Romans 15:13.
  
10. Ask God to fill you with joy.

**Application**

**Below are the main points of the message. Discuss how they apply to your life.**

- The greatest joy you will experience in this world, is the joy that comes from a deep meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.
- If you want to experience true joy in your heart, you need to turn to God with all of your heart.
- The joy of the Lord is not driven by circumstances, but it doesn't ignore circumstances. It is a deep rooted trust in the character of a loving God. It's a trust that God is creative enough to use the circumstances for His glory.