

# The Fruit of the Spirit

## Week 3: Peace and Joy

### Introduction:

This week we looked at the spiritual flavors of Peace and Joy. These two can often be the most challenging flavors to produce because of the amount of stress and problems that we deal with in this life. Too many times, the circumstances of life that we face everyday try to rob us of our peace and joy, and it becomes difficult to maintain our spiritual focus because we feel so overwhelmed and discouraged. Peace comes from the Hebrew word 'shalom', which is a holistic peace that conveys a sense of wholeness, completeness, harmony, and well-being. Joy is the Greek word 'chara' which means gladness, delight, or rejoicing, and is used to describe the inner, spiritual joy that comes from knowing and being in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

In this message we looked at the role of love in the Christian life. Here is a brief summary of our main points:

1. **Peace and Joy Go Hand in Hand:** Even though peace and joy are two distinct flavors of the fruit of the Spirit, usually where you find one, you'll find the other. Both peace and joy are characteristics of the life of a Christian. They are evidences of life in God's kingdom and come from trusting in God. (Romans 14:17-19, Romans 15:13)
2. **Peace and Joy are Internal Indicators not External Validators:** The world will tell us that we will have joy and peace when everything is right in our lives and we have everything that we want, but God tells us that peace and joy start on the inside. While we may have trials, we can have peace in Christ.
3. **Peace and Joy Is A Choice We Make Everyday:** Peace and joy are choices we make, not feelings we follow. We must be intentional to choose to 'let' God's peace rule in our hearts instead of giving permission to negative feels to reign.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How would you define peace and joy in your life, and how do you see these two working together? Reflect on Romans 14:17-19 and Romans 15:13. How have you experienced peace leading to joy, or joy leading to peace?
2. Go around the room and make a list of some of the specific "peace and joy killers" (pain, people, pressure, problems) that we face in life? What have you done in your life to help retain or regain your peace and joy through these?
3. How does the idea of peace and joy being 'internal indicators, rather than external validators' challenge the popular view of peace and joy? What does the world tell us that we need in order to have peace and joy? What does it mean for peace and joy to originate 'on the inside' through the Spirit?
4. What do you think it means to be "concerned without being controlled" by your problems? Give some examples of this. How can you maintain peace and joy in the face of difficult circumstances without letting them dominate your heart and mind? How does John 16:33 encourage you in this?
5. What did you think about the phrase, "peace and joy are choices we make, not feelings we follow"? What are the consequences of choosing to follow and focus on negative feelings instead of taking intentional steps toward peace and joy? What does it mean to you to 'let' the peace of Christ rule in your heart, verses 'letting' things like worry, fear, etc. reign over you?
6. Read Philippians 4:4-9 and discuss the five words on the 'roadmap to peace and joy': *Rejoice, Relax, Release, Rest, and Renew*. How can each of these words lead us to a life of peace and joy? Which of these words do you need to ask God to help you with the most this week?