



SDG Discussion Guide

"Great Joy" Isaiah 9:3; John 15:1-17

December 8, 2019

For starters:

What was a highlight or lowlight of your week?

How does a person's appearance or approach affect your initial experience of him or her?

How would you describe the experience of joy? How would you describe the experience of joylessness?

Guideline: The following is meant to provide interaction with the respective Sunday's sermon topic. Feel free to forward to your small group members ahead of the Sunday. Group members may also find this write up in print on that Sunday.

Before you begin your discussion, pray, and ask God to speak to your group. Listen attentively, and notice, what may God be highlighting for your consideration and learning?

Now that you have prayed, please see the following questions that may assist you in your discussion.

Read John 15:1-8. Then reread it from a different bible translation if possible. Interact with the following four questions.

1. Many Christians are disturbed by Jesus' language in verses 2 and 6. What reaction does Jesus' language here evoke from you? Elaborate.
2. What do these verses teach us about our purpose in life?
3. What benefits does Jesus promise for his disciples? Which of these do you consider the most important?
4. What does it mean to 'remain in' Jesus? How do we do it?

Now read John 15:9-17. Then reread it from a different bible translation if possible. Interact with the following questions.

5. How is love within the Trinity like the love between Jesus and us?
6. In the Christian life, what is the connection between love, joy, and obedience?
7. What can make it difficult to feel joyful?
8. What is the basis for Christian joy? Elaborate.
9. How does the message of Christmas contribute to your sense of joy?
10. How is God "nudging" you this Advent season of expectant waiting for the coming of the Lord that we celebrate at Christmas? What have you learned thus far about 'hope' or 'joy' from either Isaiah 9:1-3 or John 15:1-17 or both?

Possible Application:

Light a candle and then sing or prayerfully reflect on the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Repeat as many times as you like.

*O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear Rejoice, Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*