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**DID YOU KNOW?**


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In a very general sense, joy in the Old Testament was a corporate experience, whereas joy in the New Testament is an individual experience. Within Israel, joy was expressed through harvest and sacrificial feasts, celebrations of victory in battle, achievements of prosperity, and windfalls. That is, joy was generally circumstantial. In the New Testament, via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a new dimension of joy was realized: joy not dependent on circumstances; joy in the midst of suffering; joy at all times. Joy is part of the New Testament reality of being in Christ and Christ being in us by the Spirit. Because that is a constant reality, it overrides the effect of circumstances on joy. Good or bad harvests, defeat or victory—we can have joy.

**Group Questions**

1. Why do you think so many people are searching for joy? Have someone in your group describe a time when he or she experienced great joy.
2. In this lesson, we've discovered that God is a God of joy. When you think of God, do you think of Him as joyful? Discuss why or why not.

3. Find three verses that prove that God wants you to be joyful. Read them aloud. As a group, discuss the following questions:
  - a. Do you think joy is a choice? Why or why not?
  - b. In what ways can you practice choosing joy?
4. According to John 15:11, who is the source of true joy?
  - a. Describe the kind of joy Jesus mentioned in this verse.
  - b. According to this verse, what is the goal of Jesus' teaching?
  - c. Do you experience joy when reading God's Word? Why or why not?
5. Discuss the four strategies to becoming a more joyful person.

What are some ways you can encourage each other to practice these strategies?

6. Joy is one of those things that increases as we give it away; it multiplies as we invest it in others' lives. Take a few minutes to discuss how you can sow seeds of joy into your relationships.