

Mom2Mom
The Fruit of the Spirit
Love and Joy
TEACHER NOTES

((Teacher, please prepare for this class by reading Chapter 4-5 of the book "The Fruitful Life" by Jerry Bridges. This will allow you to elaborate on points of the lesson below as you are led by the Holy Spirit.))

((Last week's notes are here in grey for your reference. Teaching notes for this week are at the end of each fruit of the spirit section).))

I. Love - God is *the source of love*

John is called the "Apostle of Love" and in 1 John 4:7-21--among many places in his writings--he helps to understand a good deal about love.

*1 John 4: 7-21 Dear friends, let us love one another, **for love comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.*

- A. Devotion to God results in love to others.** John 13:34-35; 1 John 4 Scripture makes it clear that our devotion to God will result in love for others. Since we have experienced great love from God, we know how to love others greatly.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1 John 4:7-8 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

- B. The ability to love is given to us by God at salvation and is evidence of abiding in God.**

Romans 5:5 because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

At salvation the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are able to love Him and others, because God gave us that ability. We are positionally equipped with the spiritual gift of love, and we are instructed to live out that positional truth practical in ways every day as an evidence of our salvation. *1 John 4:9-11*

We can only know how truly to love by watching God's example of loving us, best seen in the way that He provided a way for his wrath at our sin to be satisfied by sending Christ to die on our behalf. When we come to God through Christ's death on the cross we abide in God, which means we abide in love.

C. Love is the motivation for growth in all of the fruit.

Love is the motivation behind any Christian growth in our lives. (1 Cor 13; Gal 5:22-23) ((Teacher, please emphasize this major point, especially as it will tie in to all other points we learn during this class.))

It is only because we love God and appreciate what He has done for us that we would be willing to continuously lay ourselves down to serve others. Our love for God that rose out of our thankfulness for forgiveness compels us to live for him and learn how to love others sacrificially the way He loves us.

II Cor 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Because we have been loved deeply, we are willing to give up our right to get angry, to hold grudges, to be quick tempered, to sulk, to be mean-hearted, etc. The fruit or evidence of the Holy Spirit working in us shows by our growth in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control.

D. Love is sacrificially giving of yourself to meet the needs of others.

Love is best understood by observing and understanding the gospel. The message of the gospel is that we were born to enjoy God and be enjoyed by God, but sin separated us from Him. While we were living in our sin, God sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on our behalf so that the wrath of God because of our sin might be appeased. Our faith in Christ's death on our behalf allows our relationship with God to be redeemed and restored. The sacrificial actions of Christ, dying on our behalf, are the best way to understand what love is.

I John 4:7-11 ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Scripture instructs us to follow the example of our Redeemer and to love others in the same self-sacrificial way. We can see that as we love others like Christ loved us, we are embodying Christ to each other. As we live out Christ's kind of love in our daily lives, those around us are getting the opportunity to feel as if they are being loved by Christ himself.

I John 4:11-14 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

E. Spiritual gifts practiced without love will be fruitless, distracting, and annoying.

Even the most powerfully useful and potentially edifying spiritual gift will be attention seeking and loud if it is not practiced with loving others as the motivation. Many of the gifts that God has given us are turned around and used selfishly when we do not remember to examine our motives. Our motives must always be either to love God by obeying Him or loving others in the deployment of our spiritual gifts.

*I Cor 13:1-4 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.** ²If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body [a]to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

We can see that some of the spiritual gifts that seem crucial and important will eventually disappear and no longer be useful. However, the spiritual gift of love will never be finished or withdrawn from practice for believers. Love is the one spiritual gift that will constantly be a part of the experience as a believer.

I Cor 13:8 Love never fails (ends); but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

II. Understanding love's description can help us to live it out in practical moments.

(I Cor 13:4-8a)

Understanding love more precisely defined and described will help us in the mundane moments of life to make sure that each of those moments is tempered by a love that mirrors God's character.

A. Love is...

- 1. Patient** – to suffer long, have forbearance; able to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for a long time or when dealing with problems or difficult people¹
- 2. Kind** - having or showing a gentle nature and a desire to help others; wanting and liking to do good things and to bring happiness to others²

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patient>

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kindbre>

B. Love is not...

1. **Jealous** - intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness; hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage; vigilant in guarding a possession³; (sometimes referred to in Scripture as Envious) feeling or showing unhappiness over someone else's good fortune and a desire to have the same, feeling or showing a desire to have what someone else has⁴
2. **Arrogant** (proud) having or showing the insulting attitude of people who believe that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people, exaggerating or disposed to exaggerate one's own worth or importance often by an overbearing manner, showing an offensive attitude of superiority⁵
3. **Easily Provoked** (easily angered) (irritable) becoming angry or annoyed easily⁶

C. Love does... (Love is an ACTION verb not primarily a feeling)

1. **Rejoices with the truth**
2. **Always Protects** (Bears all things) to keep (someone or something) from being harmed, lost, etc.⁷
3. **Always Trusts** (Believes all things) to believe that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc. to have confidence in (someone or something), to hope or expect that something is true or will happen⁸
4. **Always Hopes** (Hopes all things) to want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true,⁹
5. **Endures all things** to experience pain or suffering for a long time, to deal with or accept something unpleasant, to undergo (as a hardship) especially without giving in, to regard with acceptance or tolerance, to remain firm under suffering or misfortune without yielding¹⁰ (always perseveres) to continue doing something or trying to do something even though it is difficult, to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counterinfluences, opposition, or discouragement¹¹

D. Love does not...

1. **Brag** arrogant talk or manner, a pompous or boastful statement¹² (Boast) a statement in which you express too much pride in yourself or in something you have, have done, or are connected to in some way¹³
2. **Act Unbecomingly** to lack proper form which results in indecent actions¹⁴; not attractive: not becoming¹⁵ does not dishonor others to cause someone or something to

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jealous>

⁴ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/envious>

⁵ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arrogant>

⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/irritable>

⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/protects>

⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trusts>

⁹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope>

¹⁰ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endures>

¹¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/persevere>

¹² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/brag>

¹³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/boast>

¹⁴ <http://biblehub.com/greek/807.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unbecomingly>

lose honor : to cause someone or something to no longer be respected, to bring shame on, to treat in a degrading manner¹⁶ rude not having or showing concern or respect for the rights and feelings of other people : not polite ¹⁷

3. Seek Its Own insist on its own way; is not self-seeking the act or practice of selfishly advancing one's own ends ¹⁸

4. Take into account a wrong suffered (resentful) (keep a record of wrongs) to take into account, reckon, or charge something to someone's account¹⁹; having or showing a feeling of anger or displeasure about someone or something unfair²⁰

5. Rejoice in unrighteousness/wrongdoing (does not delight in evil)

E. Love is evidence of spiritual maturity.

Loving others biblically is an evidence that we have "grown up" in our faith. We no longer think and act like selfish, self-seeking little babies, but we have put away that kind of childish behavior.

I Cor 13:8-13 ⁸Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

((Click)) How do you apply this in your life?

Examples of possible applications:

- Sometimes I don't feel like loving others. In those moments I need to remember that the Holy Spirit has already poured out God's love in my heart the moment of my salvation. If I don't feel like being loving it's not because there is no love available to me. It's just that I don't feel like participating in what God is trying to do through me in that moment. I need to confess and repent of that sin.
 - Verse to meditate on and memorize:
 - **I John 1:19**
 - **John 13:34-35 and I John 4:7-8**
 - **Romans 5:5**
 - [40 Days of Love - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- I can remind myself that the motivation behind EVERYTHING I do should be "Because I love you..." If I can't genuinely say that is my motivation behind an action I should question whether I should be doing that thing in that way.
- I should remember that love may not come easily to me and I might need to learn HOW to love well.

¹⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dishonor>

¹⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rude>

¹⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-seeking>

¹⁹ <http://biblehub.com/greek/3049.htm>

²⁰ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resentful>

- [Love the Way Jesus Taught It - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Titus 2:3-5** (We are commanded to LEARN to love our husbands and kids)

((Click)) How do you help your family apply this?

Examples of possible applications:

- Everyone who is a member of our family and a follower of Jesus is capable of loving even when we don't feel like it. Sometimes we need to remind each other of that. We only act hateful, unkind, rude, or ugly when we are not walking in step with the Holy Spirit or when we have not yet been made new in salvation.
- Our love for God will motivate us to live sacrificially for others. We might even take the trash when it's not our turn, secretly put the dishes away for someone else, make someone's bed, pick up someone's shoes, fold and put away the laundry, pick up toys, etc just to show that God's love has lead us by example to serve others in a sacrificial way.
 - [Finding Hope in the Spirit's Gift of Serving | Faith Ministries Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- God's example of loving us at our worst is strong motivation to love others at their worst or most needy. Love should prompt us to serve grandmas, grandpas, the elderly, the infirm, and the disabled in ways that are self-forgetful and sincere. Serving those who are incapable should be a regular part of your family's life. We should never let our kids roll their eyes, huff, or mutter under their breath when they are serving others. It's important that they're doing the right things for the right reasons and with a honorable attitude.
- There are many ways that your family could work together to show love within the church family. When people have babies or surgery they would be blessed by a home-cooked meal that your family makes and delivers together. Serving together in Living Nativity, as Sunday School teachers, Wed Night Kids of Faith teachers, or in choir is an important way to live a life of love that is similar to Christ's.

((Click)) How does the way you apply this change across ages and stages of life?

Examples of possible applications:

- **Baby** - Loving your baby at all times, even when you're tired, need a shower, and just want a moment alone is demonstrating a supernatural love that will help your baby understand God better. Every child should be loved even if they did not turn out the way you envisioned or parenting is harder than you imagined.
 - [I Couldn't Love You More Board Book - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Toddler** - I can teach my toddler about God's love and the best way we see it demonstrated, in the gospel. Many toddlers believe that if we love them we will give them everything they want. That is often bad for them, not good for them. One of the ways we can demonstrate gospel centered love is to give them what is good for their soul and not just everything they want. Sometimes saying "no" is more loving than saying "yes" to a request.

- [Beginner's Gospel Story Bible - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- [Leading Your Child to Christ - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- [For the Love of Discipline - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Early Elementary** - I can train my early elementary age children to be ready to enter school by focusing not on themselves but on loving and serving the others in their class as a way of life. Most children feel left out and judged by others. The followers of Jesus will never run out of love, so there's always room for more friends and space for more kindness.
 - [Helping Children with Body Image - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Halle Takes a Stand - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Upper Elementary** - I can teach my upper elementary child to engage in SECRET acts of love for others. This is a great way to help my children learn to love others for no benefit other than the other person receiving love as if it was from Jesus himself. Too often upper elementary kids do the right thing so people will praise them or for the attention of others. Secret acts of love help to train children to be loving with no reward other than the pleasure of our King.
 - [Zoe's Time to Shine - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Junior High School** - I can study I Corinthians 13:4-8a with my junior high school age kids to help them understand precisely what love is, is not, does, and does not do.
- **High School** - I can help my high school age teens to notice and kill selfishness, since it is the opposite of love.
 - [Selfishness - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **College** - As my college age kids consider dating partners for marriage I can help them remember biblical definitions of love instead of worldly standards or definitions. Preparation for biblical marriage requires a firm grasp of biblical love.
 - [Love that Lasts eBook - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Adult children** - I can encourage my adult children to solve problems with difficult people and resolve conflict as biblically as possible as a way to be loving.

III. Joy is based on God's faithful promises--not our circumstances. God is the source of joy, not circumstance.

A. Joy is having a proper awareness of God's grace and favor in our lives.

The Greek word for joy from Gal 5:22 is sometimes translated "gladness." There are many links between rejoicing (to be made glad or take delight in) and grace.²¹ Grace is understood as the "unmerited favor of God toward man."²² Grace is many times understood as God giving us all the good things that we **do not** deserve, as opposed to mercy being God not giving us what we **do** deserve. Joy is the gladness that comes from

²¹ <http://biblehub.com/greek/5479.htm>

²² <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/grace/>

us recognizing God's unmerited work and gifts in our lives. Thankfulness should be a natural result of seeing God's hand in your life.

- B. **Scripture teaches that Jesus brings us joy.** Jesus is the greatest of all of the unmerited gifts that God will ever give us. When the angels announced his birth, they said that they had great news that would result in deep joy. The Messiah that the world had been awaiting for so long had finally arrived, and the whole world would experience joy because of that. All throughout Jesus' physical life on earth he brought great joy wherever he went.

Luke 2:10-11 ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 24:41 ³⁶While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and *said to them, "Peace be to you." ³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹**While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement,** He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

John 24:50-53 ⁵⁰And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem **with great joy,** ⁵³and were continually in the temple praising God.

John 17:13 But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world **so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.**

- C. **When we live our lives abiding in God's love his joy is in us, and our joy is full.** We will be able to understand joy and experience it authentically when our lives are abiding in Christ. When all of our thoughts are wrapped up in His thoughts, all of our desires are wrapped up in his desires, and all of our motivations are wrapped up in his motivations we will be able to see what God is doing in our lives and others and that will produce gladness at his work. Without an abiding in Christ, we will fail to see God's work.

John 15:1-11 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If

you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

- D. **God delights to give us answered prayers so that our joy might be full.** Our gladness for God grows as we see his wise answers to our humble prayers. He loves it when we ask for what we need, so that we may have experiences of joy as our thankfulness for his provision is experienced. *John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*
- E. **Faithfulness to the Lord deepens our joy and encourages others.** As we live faithful lives of obedience we are able to share in the same joy that Christ experienced by his faithful life of obedience to God the Father. Our small acts of faithfulness here on earth will lead to opportunities for eternity. Our capacity to enjoy heaven in the future is expanded by our faithfulness here on earth.

Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Our faithfulness to the Lord encourages other believers and gives them joy (especially our spiritual leaders). Our faithful and disciplined Christian growth helps our leaders to experience joy and not grief. When we are quick to obey God's word we do not cause unnecessary strain on the people who are responsible to God for our souls.

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

- F. **We can have joy completely detached from circumstances.** The entire book of Philippians expounds on the many reasons we have to rejoice. It needs to be understood that the book of Philippians was written by Paul while he was in prison suffering unjustly for crimes he did not commit. If joy is gladness at what God is doing in our lives, we can experience joy despite our circumstances. Our happiness is not tied to things going our way. Instead, joy is linked to the God that is sovereignly guiding those circumstances for our good and his glory (Rom 8:28,29)
- G. **The deepest experiences of joy are obtained by having an eternal perspective.** Many times it is easy to forget that there is so much more to the Christian life than what can be experienced on earth. When we fail to have an eternal perspective we lose our ability to see past the present suffering we may be enduring because of our circumstances. Having an eternal perspective allows us to suffer great losses and crosses because we can see the great joy that lies ahead. We are willing and able to go through suffering,

because we can see ahead to the joy that we will experience because of God's work throughout the ordeal.

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

An eternal perspective gives us the ability to suffer long and have endurance, because we remember that there is more to life than the physical experiences we are enduring now.

Heb 10:32–36 ³²*But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴**For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.** ³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

1 Peter 1:6–9 ⁶*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸and though you have not seen Him, **you love Him**, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, **you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.***

IV. Our joy is tied to our ability to deny ourselves for the benefit of others.

As joy is based in God's promises, not circumstance, our joy grows not in serving self, but serving others.

Many times, we erroneously believe that we will be happy when we get what we want. But counterintuitively, God commands us to give up our personal freedoms in order to show love and serve others. God ties our experiences of joy with our self-sacrifice.

Romans 14:13–17 ¹³*Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. ¹⁴I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. ¹⁶**Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

Rom 15:1, 7, 13 *Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and **not just please ourselves.** . . . ⁷Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. . . . ¹³**Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.***

A. **What we do and say for God's glory encourages other believers and gives them joy.**

Meeting needs for others, serving them, providing for them, and embodying Christ to them will bring joy to others as well as ourselves.

*Acts 15:33 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, **describing in detail** the conversion of the Gentiles, and **were bringing great joy to all the brethren.***

B. **Trials and/or discipline from the Lord can produce joy.** God uses all different manners of interaction with us to conform us to the image of Christ. Often, he uses trials or difficulties that are unrelated to our conduct, but sometimes, he uses discipline in response to our sinful decisions. In all cases, we can be hopeful when life is hard, because we are able to see the good that God is performing in our hearts and lives in the middle of it.

Heb 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

John 16:21 ²¹ Whenever a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world.

We can consider it all joy when we encounter trials, because we see that God is perfecting us and growing us up, so that we will be mature and lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4 ²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Jesus is our example of being willing to do hard things in order to experience the joy that those trials will produce. Although Jesus never had to be disciplined, he did endure suffering. He was able to endure that suffering because he set his eyes on what would be its result. Jesus is our perfect example of how to have joy even when life is very hard.

Heb 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(to despise here means to think little of; consider of no consequence – “[Jesus enduring the cross] is reinforced by the accompanying clause, despising the shame, an attitude which does not ignore the shame, but holds it to be of no consequence in view of the joy.²³)

C. **Joy is diminished when we sin, but returned or increased when we confess.**

Many scriptures point to the loss of joy when we live in unrepentant sin.

²³ Donald Guthrie, [*Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 15, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 252.

*Ps. 32: 1-5 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

When we sin, we are presuming that God is withholding something good from us by His prohibitions in Scripture, and we willfully pursue our own satisfaction outside of obedience to His word. *Repentance returns our joy*, because we humbly return to the position of believing that there are no good gifts apart from God. This allows us to be glad at the way we see him working in our lives.

*I John 1:4 and 1:8-10 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. . . .
8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Optional Memory Verse: *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. I Peter 1:8-9*

((Click)) How do you apply this in your life?

Examples of possible applications:

- I can have gladness and joy even when I'm tired, haven't had a shower, am on my period, or want to feel grumpy.
- The more I am aware of all of the things God has done for me the more I will see his grace and favor in my life. If I need to be reminded of this, a thankful list might help me be more aware of actual things God has recently done for me.
- [Risen Motherhood: How the Gospel Produces Joy in Mothering](#)
- I can memorize **Psalm 16:11** and remind myself that Jesus is the only thing that actually brings me real, lasting joy.

((Click)) How do you help your family apply this?

Examples of possible applications:

- When we have needs we can pray together as a family. When we see answered requests we can record them in some way to have evidence of God's care for us. Some people use a thankful journal or memorial Christmas tree decorations as reminders.

- When death affects our family it is helpful to be ready to teach our children about the reality of heaven, so they are excited to go there. Take advantage of even non-human deaths to broach the topic of death and eternity with your kids.
 - [Heaven for Kids - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Questions Children & Adults Ask About Grief and Death - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- All families experience suffering and hard times. The more we can keep a right perspective the more we will experience joy within those trials. It is tempting during trials to isolate and separate, but during trials it is especially important to band together in solidarity and companionship during suffering.
 - It may be helpful to memorize **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** or **James 1:2-5** together.
- When your child is living with the consequences of his choices, encourage him with **Hebrews 12:11**.
- Not disciplining a wrong child is a good way to steal joy from your child. It often feels like just giving in to our kids will help them be happy, but letting children get away with sin actually builds anger and resentment, since every child is given a conscience and knows right from wrong. Learn to discipline your children correctly and work together as a family team.
 - [For the Love of Discipline - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Heart of Anger - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Angry Children - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)

How does the way you apply this change across ages and stages of life?

Examples of possible applications:

- **Baby** - Enjoy your baby! Even though they are a lot of hard work, and you're giving up a lot to be a great mom there are so many wonderful things to enjoy. Soak them in. God gives us all good things to enjoy, including the pleasure our babies bring us.
- **Toddler** - Teach your children to enjoy the good things God has given them like a beautiful walk in the woods, a delicious apple, a nice long swing on the swingset. Point out how God has given them good things to enjoy, so that they feel some of the joy God feels when he thinks of them.
- **Early Elementary** - Most elementary age kids would prefer to be served instead of serving others, but the Bible tells us that real joy comes from self-denial and self-sacrifice. Make sure your kids have opportunities every day to deny themselves and serve others, and teach them to see needs and meet them as a habit.
- **Upper Elementary** - Faithfulness in menial tasks can help produce joy, so teach your kids to faithfully do their best every time they do something as if it is a gift of love to God. Writing neatly, finishing their tasks, picking up after themselves when they are finished with something, putting clothes in the dirty hamper and

not next to it are all habits of faithfulness that will help develop the joy that comes with godliness.

- **Junior High School** - Enjoy your junior high schoolers in a way that reflects God's enjoyment of you and gladness at your love. Junior highers are often awkward, embarrassing, and embarrassed. Do your best to help them understand that you really do enjoy them and find them delightful (even if you have to ask for God's help a lot while they are learning how to transition from being little kids to being teens).
- **High School** - Find joy in your teen not because of what they can do but in who they are. Help them to know that you see them as a gift to both you and your family, and their presence in your life is one of God's greatest gifts of grace to you. Many teens worry that their family's love is tied to their performance, and incredible anxiety can build. Teach them that you'll love them and delight in them no matter what mistakes they make, and you'll always be available to help them clean up a mess they've gotten themselves into if necessary.
- **College** - Remind college age kids that real joy comes not from moments of temporal happiness but from abiding in God's love for us and living in tight connection to him.
- **Adult children** - I can encourage my adult children to grow in humility as a path to true joy. I can also encourage my adult children to be content as a path to joy.
 - [Humility: The Joy of Self-Forgetfulness - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
 - [Contentment: Joy that Lasts - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)

((click)) Table Discussion Questions (** is also a Large Group Discussion Question)

1. ** How would you like to grow in personal application of Love and Joy?
2. How do you think you might need to help your family grow in application of this topic?
3. ** How do you see the application of this topic affecting your children at their current age/stage?

((click)) Reading Discussion Questions

Discuss the questions on [Worksheet #3](#), which was assigned last week. [A helpful resource](#) including the passage discussed in this worksheet as well as some commentary was published on www.faithlafayette.org/mom2mommember.

Table Time Prayer Request Question:

In what specific ways can we ask Jesus to help you grow in Love and Joy this week?

((click)) Large Group Discussion Question

Table time discussion questions 1 and 3 will be used for large group discussion.