

# The Heart of Christmas

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## Week 1 | Joy to the World

### BOTTOM LINE

We see the joy of God is serving others and in others we serve.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This guide is a suggestion. Adjust the questions as appropriate for your group.

### SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:1-9

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book of Philippians contains the mind-set and attitude a believer must have if he or she is going to experience the joy of God in our troubled world. Do you think worldly joy is different than the joy of God? Why or why not?
2. Read Philippians 4:1-9: Philippians is actually a letter written by the apostle Paul to the people of Philippi. In chapter 4, Paul provides words of encouragement. He mentions two women by name (verse 2) who are having a disagreement. Paul encourages joy and discourages worry. Do you see a connection between joy and worry? Share your thoughts with the group.
3. The joy referred to in verse 4 is deeper than mere happiness, is rooted in God, and comes from Him. Was there a time in your life you experienced this type of joy? How was God present during this time?
4. Joy from God is more serene and stable than worldly happiness, which is merely emotional and lasts only for a time. What barriers get in the way of experiencing joy from God?
5. Read Philippians 4:6-7: The fruit of joy is the awareness that God is our personal strength and protector. What could your life look like if you asked God to redirect your thoughts to His strength and protection the next time you were tempted to worry or reach for worldly happiness? What would it look like if you channeled the energy of worry into prayer?

Joy will always fill our hearts when we look for it in God. Psalm 30:11 says: "You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy." Joy is attainable anytime and anywhere with God.



## TRY THIS

*Think about a person in your life who is filled with God's joy through serving others. What are the characteristics of this person you want to mimic in your own life? What gifts, talents or passions has God created in you that you can use to serve others? Write down what comes to mind and ask God to help you take a new step in serving others.*