

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

JOURNEY INTO JOY

WEEK 2 | CRAIG REES

*Psalm 16:11 • Matthew 9:14-17; 11:18-19 • Mark 2:21 • John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19 • Romans 14:17
1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:18; 12:21-26 • Gal. 5:22-23*

**An indicator of having encountered Jesus is a joy-filled life.
Religious people are not necessarily the most joyful people.**

1. Do you agree that religious people are not necessarily the most joyful people? If you agree, why do you agree? If not, why not?
2. Happiness is what happens to you; joy is what is produced in you. Do you tend to focus on your circumstances? What do you find yourself often putting in this fill-in-the-blank: "I'd be happy if _____"?
3. Encountering Jesus gives us every opportunity to celebrate because 'chara' is a natural response to 'charis'. On a scale of 1 (not very) and 10 (very), how prevalent is joy in your life?

What does your self-evaluation tell you that you need to address? How will you address this?
4. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). In your opinion, what should a life filled with joy look like?
5. Read Romans 14:17. Since joy characterizes life in the kingdom, how should joy affect the practice of fasting and other disciplines?
6. When there is a schism in relationships so that they "tear" apart, to what degree could the breaking of the relationship be tied to a loss of joy? How important is joy for a healthy relationship?
7. Are you in the habit of counting your blessings when things get tough? If not, the next time a problem arises and anxiety starts to take hold, take a moment to name five blessings in your life. In fact, take a moment right now and list five blessings in your life.
8. Can you think of an example of something that you held on so tightly too, that it killed your joy? Why do you think that happened? What did you learn from that experience?
9. What is your next step on your journey into joy? How can your small group support you as you journey into joy?