



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

### 7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

March 8, 2020 Lesson 2

As we continue our series today with the **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"** we will be focusing primarily on Godly Peace and Joy. You will remember from last week, we initially set up the whole series and mentioned each of the deadly characteristics that can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

1. Perfectionism
2. Comparisons
3. Pride
4. Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)
5. Competiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives
6. Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts
7. Control

We then spent most of our time on "Godly Contentment", defining and studying how God has set out a plan for us to achieve that Spiritual condition.

However, before we start today, we need to remind ourselves that this whole series is about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

#### A. **Introduction of Terms**

##### **What is Godly Peace?**

- Biblical Peace rests heavily on the Hebrew root "Salom", which means "to be complete" or "to be sound." The verb conveys both a dynamic and a static meaning "to be complete or whole" or "to live well." It can be grouped into multiple categories:
  - Wholeness of life or body (i.e., health)
  - Right relationship or harmony between people, often established by a covenant related to God
  - Prosperity, success, or fulfillment
  - Victory over one's enemies or absence of war. It was meant to act as a blessing on the one to whom it was spoken
  - Completeness and safety
- God alone is the sole source of Peace. He established a covenant of peace. Participants were given perfect peace so long as they maintained a right relationship with the Lord.
- God's peace is delivered through the Messiah. Peace with God came through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The Relationship of Righteousness to Peace. The Lord established a covenant, which resulted in the participants receiving his peace, however, peace could be disturbed if one did not live before the Lord and others in righteousness; in fact, peace is one of the fruits of righteousness.
- Peace cannot occur until man has a right relationship with God, who is the "Prince of Peace"

##### **Isaiah 26:1-27**

*In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. <sup>2</sup> Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith. <sup>3</sup> You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. <sup>4</sup> Trust in*

the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.<sup>5</sup> He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust.<sup>6</sup> Feet trample it down—the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor.<sup>7</sup> The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth....<sup>12</sup> Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.<sup>13</sup> Lord our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone do we honor.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.<sup>17</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.<sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

### **Ephesians 2:14-18**

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,<sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.<sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.<sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

### **Isaiah 32:17-18**

<sup>15</sup> The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.<sup>18</sup> My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.<sup>19</sup> Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely,<sup>20</sup> how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.

### **Jeremiah 33:16-18**

<sup>2</sup> “This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is his name:<sup>3</sup> ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.<sup>4</sup> For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword<sup>5</sup> in the fight with the Babylonians: ‘They will be filled with the dead bodies of the people I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security.<sup>7</sup> I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before.<sup>8</sup> I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.<sup>9</sup> **Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth** that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.’

### **John 14:27**

<sup>27</sup> For this is what Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Godly Peace is an inner spiritual state of being, affecting both physical and mental, with knowledge and understanding that He will provide all that is needed in the face of any pressure, stress, worry or situation that may arise in your life. Godly peace is the exact opposite of being stressed, anxious or extreme worrying.

The peace offered by the world is an empty promise and can only bring temporary comfort at best. God’s peace is a permanent peace offered by the only One who can be trusted to keep his Word and heal our sin.

*“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)*

***Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)***

God’s peace is built on the sure foundation of his Word. He never contradicts himself or acts in a way that is out of character. He will never disappoint.

***Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble. (Psalm 119:165)***

***You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)***

God’s peace is ours because Jesus heals our root problem of sin. All religions other than true Christianity have one thing in common: They try to achieve peace with God by doing works and following rules. In Christ, we are offered peace with God because we who “once were far off” (Ephesians 2:13) have now been reconciled to God through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

### **What is Godly Joy?**

Merriam or Worldly Dictionary Definitions of Joy:

- The emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires
- Delight - the expression or exhibition of such emotion
- State of happiness or bliss, cause of delight

A slightly better definition comes from Theopedia as “a state of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope.”

As was the case with our discussion of Contentment, we have to be very careful adopting or training our thoughts to accept false doctrines. These worldly definitions leave a lot to be desired compared to Godly Joy. **Joy comes** from the Lord and through our focus on Him, not something generated from possessions, outcomes or only from things we perceive as “Good in our Lives”. This is not to say that Joy cannot be derived from many different sources, but we are focusing on the one true definition God has listed in His Word. The **Joy** of the Lord is eternal and **God’s joy** is provided despite our circumstances, trials or tribulations.

Let’s look at several Key Biblical ways to look at Godly Joy:

#### **1. Worldly Joy Is Fickle And Temporary**

The joy that the world offers is a pale imitation of the true joy only God can provide. The joy that unsaved people experience is a temporary joy that comes and goes depending on the situation that person is in at the time. If things are going well, there may be joy. When things are difficult, there is no joy. In the [book of Job](#), one of Job’s friends utters some insightful words: “...*the exulting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment?*” (Job 20:5). There can be no true joy apart from God.

#### **2. In The Old Testament, Joy Was Associated With The True Worship Of God**

Joy is a prominent feature of the true worship of God in the Old Testament. Wherever people know, love, and worship God; [His love](#) instills a joy, that only He can give, into the hearts of His

worshippers (I Chronicles 15:16; Ezra 3:12, 6:16; Psalm 16:11, 32:11, 51:12). The people's renewed commitment to God reignited the joy in their hearts that only He can produce. Believers today can experience this same joy when he or she is dedicated to Jesus.

### 3. Joy Is A Gift From God

Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which resides in the heart of the believer, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..."* (Galatians 5:22). Since God is the author of all these good things, when one becomes a Christian, and is united to God through faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit imparts these qualities to the believer. Joy is also an integral part of the Kingdom of God and will exist wherever believers are present, *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 14:17).

### 4. Doing God's Will Increases Our Joy

As many Christians can attest, being involved in the spread of the Gospel brings joy to the believer's heart. The apostle Paul experienced this often in his ministry (II Corinthians 1:24, 2:3; Philippians 1:4, 2:2; I Thessalonians 2:19, 20, 3:9; II Timothy 1:4; Philemon 1:7). The writer of Third John experienced the joy of ministry, *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth"* (3 John 1:4).

### 5. Circumstances Cannot Take Away Our Joy

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:10, Paul says that Christians can even be *"sorrowful, yet always rejoicing"*. This means that even when we are in the midst of a situation that legitimately brings us sorrow, our inner joy is never taken away. The very core of our being can still rejoice in the fact that we are forgiven children of God who enjoy an intimate relationship with the Creator of the universe. Our joy is strengthened when we remember that, no matter what the circumstances, God is with us and He is above all. James says that we should, *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness"* (James 1:2-3).

### 6. The One Thing That Can Steal Our Joy Is Sin

Godly joy is a wonderful thing; it is a supernatural gift from God to every believer. However, Sin can and will steal our joy. It is difficult to experience the joy of our relationship with God when we have done something that damages that relationship. Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit; when we grieve the Holy Spirit by our sin, we interfere with the flow of joy (among other things) from God. If we find that we are experiencing less and less joy, we have to ask ourselves honestly why and need to reevaluate our relationship with Jesus to make sure we are living as we should.

### 7. Christians Should 'Rejoice Always'

There are several passages in the New Testament where Paul instructs us to 'rejoice'. These passages carry a sense of urgency or command, where Paul is saying that a Christian is to be full of joy and he is urging believers to make sure that their relationships with God and others are relationships that produce joy (Philippians 3:1, 4:4). He also writes in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:16-18, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"*. This joy, prayer, and thanksgiving should characterize the life of the Christian. We are to remain steadfast in our knowledge that God is our strength and comfort, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. If our relationship with Jesus is right, we can experience this supernatural joy at all times...whether those times be good or bad.

**B. Questions for Small Group Discussion:**

1. Many of the scriptures above mention phrases such as “the perfect peace”, “the fruit of righteousness will be peace”, “undisturbed places of rest” and “the way of the righteous is level and smooth”:
  - a. God’s word specifically mentions a path or steps on how to achieve this. There are at least 9 specific items listed above, find them, discuss and write them down. We will compare notes at the end of class.
2. What does our worrying, stress levels and extreme anxiety in our everyday life demonstrate about our trust in God’s peace?
3. Discuss why God’s word keeps coming back to “righteousness” and “Purity” as the foundation for Peace?
  - a. Do people usually associate “Purity”, “Righteousness” and “lack of Sin” to your level of stress, anxious or pressure in their lives?
4. Discuss how our Joy is a direct indicator of our Relationship with God and our Purity:
  - a. Take a second alone to contemplate how our own personal sin interferes by grieving the Holy Spirit. Personally assess whether we need a re-commitment to reduce sin and strengthen our relationship
  - b. What does God say about the prospect of Joy and Peace if we are not Pure and Righteous?
  - c. With Joy being a gift from God through the Holy Spirit, what can we do to increase our Joy?
5. How can anyone “Always Rejoice and be Joyful even in Sorrow”?
6. If someone looks at your life, will they see “Joy in all things”? Think about this for a few moments before responding:
  - a. Using verses such as 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:10 and Philippians 3:1, 4:4; discuss how we can experience “True Joy” no matter our circumstances?
  - b. Can someone share a personal story of tragedy, difficult times or sorrow that they experienced, but were able to maintain and experience “Godly Joy” through it all?
  - c. In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:15-18, why would praying and giving thanks without ceasing impact our Joy?
  - d. How does our degree of Contentment affect our Joy, discuss?