

White Elephant

Part 2: Sorrow for Joy

WEEK OF DECEMBER 12, 2021

Nobody wants to experience sorrow. It would be the White Elephant gift that everyone's trying to get rid of. If you want to trade your sorrow for joy...there's a secret. Find out what it is.

MESSAGE NOTES AND HIGHLIGHTS

- What do I do with my sorrow?
 - Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. | Psalm 30:5
 - Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - Happiness is more shallow. Joy is deep.
 - Happiness is very short-term. Joy is long-term.
 - Happiness comes and goes easily. Joy can last.
 - Happiness can be a bit more like a light switch, on and off.
 - Joy is developed, cultivated, chosen, and practiced.
 - Happiness reacts. Joy transcends.
 - Happiness can't share space with other emotions. Joy can.
 - The secret to trading your sorrow for joy? Embrace your sorrow. Lean into it. Sometimes, the path to joy runs *through* sorrow, not around it.
 - Grief comes in waves.
 - Christmas reminds us that Jesus became fully human and experienced the highs and lows of humanity.
 - Jesus wept. | John 11:35
 - Jesus was "...despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain." | Isaiah 53:3
 - Lean into your sorrow. Only then can healing begin.
 - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." | Matthew 5:4
 - Cultivate joy. Choose it. Practice it. Pray continually. Practice gratitude.
 - For joy that transcends, put your hope in the One who transcends all.
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define the distinction between happiness and joy? Can you think of any examples of what that distinction looks like for you personally?
2. What are the ways in which you typically try to deal or cope with sorrow, disappointment, or pain?
3. We see multiple examples of Jesus and the apostles and prophets expressing their sorrow in scripture, and Jesus says in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." What can we learn from those examples and words about how to deal with our sorrow and pain?
4. What are some ways you can practice, develop, and cultivate joy that is present and sustains you even during difficult times?