

## **Journey Into Joy**

### **CARE Lessons for April, May, June and July 2008**

**April 2008 – Journey into God’s Resources**

**May 2008 – Journey into Personal Growth**

**June 2008 – Journey into Deeper Faith**

**July 2008 – Journey into His Power**

### **APRIL**

#### **Introduction:**

Joy in serving Jesus does not come from mastering doctrine, understanding theology, or memorizing scriptures.

Spiritual life goes way beyond the intellect.

#### **Open discussion: Where does your personal joy come from?**

*Answer we are looking for:* My personal relationship with Jesus.

We do not marry because of intellectual analysis.

We do not choose a career by a computerized evaluation of options.

We all have a spiritual intuitiveness that attracts us to our path in life.

Our relationship with Jesus is no different...we are somehow drawn to Him.

#### **Open Discussion: How were you drawn to Christ?**

*Answer we are looking for:* By the Holy Spirit

God knows our emotions and feelings.

God knows our personality and gifting.

God shapes situations and events to reach us individually.

### **Journey Into God’s Resources**

*“He withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” -Luke 5:16*

What are your needs?

Money?

Health?

Peace?

Wisdom?

If you need an answer to life's challenge, God has it!

**Group Participation:** How many can share a testimony of God's provision?

Allow the group to testify with faith building stories.

*Remind that we are dealing with the subject of Journeying into God's Resources.*

Discussion Questions:

1. How important is persistence as a prayer tool for the Christian?
2. How important is it to make prayer a priority?
3. How willing is our God when it comes to answer prayer?

Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but really taking hold of God's willingness!

Thanks to Jesus, God is a friend and a father!

**Group Participation:** How may we develop a deeper prayer life?

1. Private prayer.

Jesus found a quiet place in the middle of the wilderness to pray alone...private.

2. Honest Prayer

It is vital that you are open and honest with God who already knows before you pray. Prayer is not a social gathering with God where you smile and joke and tell him how great your life is going. It is a place to unload your burden and cast your care.

3. Humble Prayer

He is God! He is sovereign! Open fists can receive while clenched fists only strike out and batter. Surrender with open hands. This really goes with the honest heart!

4. Pray with Faith!

Without this ingredient it is futile and will render no result. It is impossible to please God without it! Don't make it hard...childlike! Ask believing!

Conclusion:

Prayer is just the beginning of your journey into Joy.

Prayer always closes the gap between you and God...the Name of Jesus is the bridge.

Be careful to watch and pray...see what the Lord has done...You asked for it!

His hand moves quickly, slowly, and mysteriously...God answers prayer!

## MAY

### Story to open:

Two farm boys and their city-slicker cousin were walking cautiously across the pasture when a huge Holstien bull spotted them across the hard pan dirt. He was the biggest animal on the farm at over 1000 pounds.

The boys walked sideways with eyes locked on the bull. They knew that if they broke and ran, it would be like a locomotive when the bull trampled them. The 10 yards to the fence may as well have been 10 miles for the two six year olds and the five year old younger brother. Their heads didn't come up to the bull's shoulder.

"He's going to charge!" the six year old whispered to his little brother. There was a lowering of the head with a snort, followed by a raking of dust from the front hoof.

"If he moves, run for the fence as fast as you can" said the farm boy. All the visiting cousin could manage was, "S-O-O-O big!"

The conversation triggered the bull somehow and the charge was on! The boys went racing for the fence and the bull seemed to enjoy the new respect and self-importance. The boys were skimming the ground running and the bull was snorting and stirring dust. The city kid glanced back for just a second and the scene was etched in his mind forever. He would remember every detail in full color!

The older farm boy picked up a chunk of wood and turned the tables on the bull. He let out a high-pitched yell and waved the stick wildly at the bull. He then headed straight for the charging animal as fast as the two others were fleeing.

The bull stopped short and turned his head to the side to gaze at the running farm boy. The boy screamed and the bull stepped back a step. He then pivoted on his rear legs and headed for the open pasture.

As the three boys walked across the driveway, the cousin from the city asked, "How'ya do that?"

"Oh, I wasn't worried", said the older farm boy. "He doesn't know how big he is. We raised him from a calf, and he still thinks he's a calf. On the inside he is a calf. He thinks I can still whup 'im."

Too many Christians don't know who they are. Like the bull, on the inside we think we are still weak. Our subject for this meeting is

### **Journey into Personal Growth**

God's people were bullied by the giants in Canaan

God's people were bullied by Goliath

Too many times we are intimidated by things surrounding our lives.

"Worm theology" fills our spirits from the old hymn that says "such a worm as I"

We think of our selves as "Grasshoppers in their sight"

Joy in the Lord comes from personal growth!

Self-esteem, self-acceptance in the natural world results in one of two things: PRIDE or SELF-CONDEMNATION>

Both are sins!

**Question: What is the difference between self-confidence and pride? Biblical examples?**

**David as he faces Goliath**

**Joshua and Caleb as they say “we are able ...”**

God knew us before anything existed...Jesus still thought we were worth the price.

Only God is great...God in us is the only thing that is going for us.

And if God is for us...who can be against us?

To build a life without God is folly.

God understands all of life's challenges and struggles.

We are commanded to love others, but without loving God first, then discovering that God loves us...we are powerless to love others.

Life is complicated...God says keep it simple.

Avoid the complex life.

**Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)**

***33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***

Life will trap you if you let it!

Simplicity doesn't mean simplistic.

It is like watching an organist play the organ.

It looks easy and smooth...but it is everything but easy!

It is a mastered art and so is the Simple life that God desires.

Practice the attitude of simplicity. It is an art.

Simplicity is always reducing the complex to a lowest denominator.

Things needing to become simple:

- Giving
- Conflict resolution
- Relationships
- Faith

The big question about simplicity: “Is God pleased?”

It seems almost the opposite: *Personal growth through simplicity*

4 Steps to Simplicity:

1. Decide what God wants from us. (prayer, meditation, fasting, study)
2. Avoid controlling someone else. (Work out #1 with fear and trembling)
3. Obey without asking any questions. Just DO IT!
4. Get up when you fall and try again. Never quit!

This concludes our 2<sup>nd</sup> step of the Journey into Joy series. Next Month: **Journey into Deeper Faith**