



A Vision for Joy – Connect Group Session

This session is meant to be approached by taking about 20 minutes to quickly do the bulk of the questions, and then another 20 minutes to discuss the final section in the yellow box, and finished with a time of prayer for each other and our church.

Over the last 3 weeks, we have been looking at A Vision for Joy in the book of Isaiah as we have thought about our vision as a church for the coming year.

Can you give a biblical definition of joy?

- *Contentment that is not dependent on our circumstances*
- *Jesus Over You*

Can you remember the theme verse of the sermon series?

You will find your joy in the Lord (Isaiah 58:14a)

In this CG session we are going to have a quick look at the passage that this verse comes in.

Read Isaiah 58:9b-14

In twos - can you see the two halves of the passage, and how each half is structured? Discuss and feedback.

v.9b-12 and v.13-14 – and both sections say If....Then.....

Short summary teaching to be given by the leader of the session:

v.9b-12 is about our outreach:

- stretching the tent
- wide shoots
- our horizontal relationship out to the world

v.13-14 is about our discipleship

- strengthening the stakes
- deep roots
- our vertical relationship up to God

Isaiah is saying that as we look to relate to God and to the world/others right, so we will experience all sorts of blessings – the “then” bit of each half of the passage.

Looking at the two “then” bits of the passage, can you spot the three themes we have been looking at over the last three weeks?

- *City – v.12 – rebuild ancient ruins etc*
- *Vineyard/fruitfulness – v.11 – a well-watered garden*
- *Banquet – v.14 – a feast*

Thinking about our theme verse – where are you tempted to look for joy apart from the Lord?

What is the problem with doing this?

We can look in all sorts of places to find that deep soul satisfaction – in success or money or relationship or family or sex. All of those can be great things in their proper context – but none of them can bear the weight of the longing of our souls. Like a thirsty person glugging down seawater to quench their thirst, the more we consume of any of these other things to try and quench the longing of our souls, the more actually the problem grows. It is only Jesus that can truly quench our thirst and satisfy our hunger in the here and now and bring us joy

In applying this vision to the life of the church, Jago encouraged us all to do five things – can you remember what they were?

Belong, Grow, Pray, Serve and Give

Longer discussion time of application to be facilitated by the leader (20 mins):

Let's think how we can do each of these five things with joy? See avisionforjoy.com for details

Belong – how can we feel a part of HTC? Link to Church Weekend Away, Boat Party and Hubs

Grow – how can we grow as a follower of Jesus? CG should be helping with this

Pray – Monthly prayer meeting and sign up for HTC PRAY – daily whatsapp prayer

Serve – get different people in your group sharing where and how they are serving in the life of the church, and saying if it is a joyful experience! Point to ***the Serve form*** for those who would like to serve

Give – encourage everyone to give financially, and with joy! Encourage people to fill in ***the Giving form*** by the end of the week, and please lead by example!

PRAY:

For us to be people of JOY. As individuals, as a Connect Group and as HTC.

NEXT WEEK:

For the rest of the autumn, in CGs we will be following our Sunday Sermon series – *Food for the Soul: Meals with Jesus in the book of Luke.*

(Leader notes should be with you by Friday!)