



Courageous joy

LEADER GUIDE FOR COURAGEOUS JOY

Dear Leader Friends,

We are so grateful for your willingness to link arms with us on this journey of leaning into *Courageous Joy*. This study will help you unpack your joy misconceptions and discover what delighting in God through every season of life really means.

As a facilitator of this Bible study, you have a special opportunity to encourage and lead others into a deeper understanding of Scripture and relationship with Jesus Christ. **Don't worry about teaching; the workbook and videos will do that.** Your role is to invite your ladies into conversation about what God is teaching them. In other words, we want you to go on the journey with them.

Some of the questions in this study may challenge your group. Ladies might have to step out of their comfort zones to share. **We hope you will model this by "going first"** and sharing honestly from your own life. This will set the tone so group members will feel free and safe to participate.

Get to know the people in your group. Where are they coming from? Where are they in their faith journey? Give the women time to respond thoughtfully and apply the questions to their current contexts.

When you find that women have not had time to complete the homework, **offer them grace.** There are all kinds of reasons people cannot get to the homework. Continue to gently encourage them to carve out time daily to complete the study. You might want to read the passages aloud in your group and then answer the questions together to help guide the group members to deeper understanding if they are new to Bible study or didn't get to the questions.

We also want to encourage you to **take time to meditate on the key Scripture together** each week. You might suggest the women write these out and read them throughout the week or recite them aloud when you are together. Many believe they are not good at memorizing but some encouragement from you goes a long way to helping them spend time meditating on God's Word.

Be creative! You have the freedom to make this study your own. *Courageous Joy* is about learning how you can truly count it all joy, even when the "all" you're living is not the "all" you were hoping for or expecting. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can find joy so abundant that we're compelled to share it with everyone we encounter. Thank you for partnering with us in the Gospel. We're so expectant for what God is going to do in and through your shared time studying His Word.

For His Glory,
Your friends at (in)courage

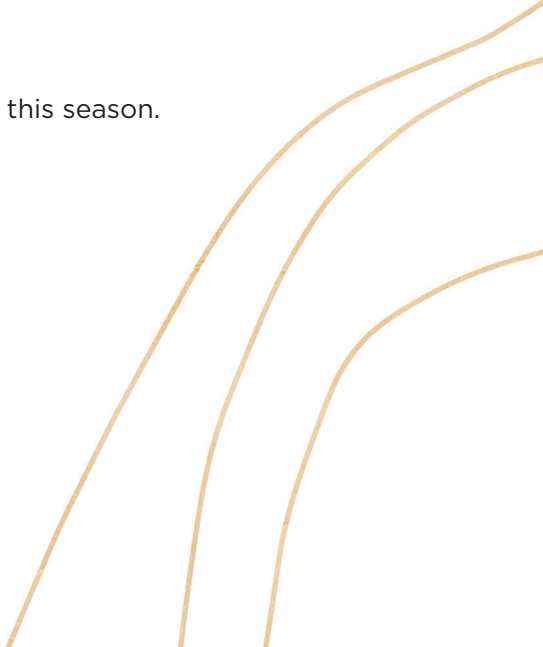
AS YOU LEAD

Courageous Joy is a great study for small group use. If you're doing it with a group, we recommend allowing at least 45-60 minutes for discussion and group time. Keep groups small enough so that you can really dig in deep.

We know each group situation will be unique. Some of you may be meeting with one or two friends, while others might be gathering a group of 8-10 women from your church or neighborhood. Some of you may be meeting online, while others are coming together in a home or around a table.

We want to encourage you to make this time your own. Pay attention to the unique needs of your group. Never underestimate the power of praying for discernment as you lead.


Here are some quick tips for leading discussion groups:

1. Choose the length of time to meet and communicate the dates with your group. This will help people plan ahead and know the commitment from the start.
 2. Carve out some time for your group to get to know each other. Remind them about confidentiality. Ask God to give you a genuine love and sensitivity toward each member.
 3. When you meet, focus on main themes and how God is working in individual hearts.
 4. Model authenticity and vulnerability for your group.
 5. Invite women to the discussion even if they haven't finished the homework.
 6. Sometimes a woman might dominate the conversation. You might give her a job to help you or enlist her help to get others to participate.
 7. Ask questions and allow for silence to engage the quieter women or women who need some time to process.
 8. If someone shares something deep and personal, even emotional, take time to look them in the eye and thank them for taking that risk and sharing.
 9. Resist the urge to counsel women; instead, pray for them.
 10. Challenge women to meditate on and memorize Scripture during this season.
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ICEBREAKER SUGGESTIONS

Have fun and be creative on how you break the ice with your group each week. You might consider asking a simple question like “What made an impact on you from the study or video teaching this week?”

The following are some icebreaker questions that might help you get to know your group members. You could ask one at the start of each meeting. You might also search online for icebreaker games for small groups or be inventive and make your own. **The idea is to help get to know the women in your group, to build trust and connections.**

1. Who did you spend the most time with growing up?
 2. If you could travel anywhere in the world and money wasn't an object, where would you go?
 3. Was there a moment you can remember where you decided to follow Jesus?
 4. What food is your guilty pleasure?
 5. When you think of the word “cozy,” what comes to mind?
 6. What has been one of the biggest challenges for you in this season?
 7. What's your favorite order at your local coffeeshop, tea house or smoothie shop?
 8. What is one book you can't do without?
 9. What's a movie you could watch over and over again? Why?
 10. What is something that helps you rest?
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WEEK OUTLINES

The following are outlines for you to use for your group time each week. If possible, watch the weekly video together, then process the question from the video together before moving into discussion of the lessons. Conclude with a time of prayer approximately 10-15 minutes. Try to encourage your group to focus in on the prayer points for the day. You might consider having members pray for themselves and let others agree with them in prayer or share around the circle if you have time.

WEEK 1: WHAT IS JOY?

Process together:

Where do you most often find yourself looking for joy?

Discuss:

1. Read Colossians 3:2-5 together. What are some of the gifts you've received that come from God? (p. 16)
2. In Day 2 this week, we read three stories about things that were lost. Which of these three parables speaks most meaningfully to you? (p. 24)
3. Has anyone ever questioned your authenticity or criticized you for expressing joy or looking for the silver lining in a situation? (p. 28)
4. Read Romans 15:2-5 together. What is Paul's reasoning for why believers should serve others to the point of sacrificing themselves? Do you think this kind of service could bring you joy? (p. 35)
5. Which was emphasized as more important in the religious tradition or the family you were raised in: knowledge or joy? How did that affect your faith? (p. 40)

Pray:

Ask God to show you the path to courageous joy over these next six weeks. Pray together about areas you can make space for joy and delight.

Meditate:

"He will delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

—Zephaniah 3:17



WEEK 2: JOY IN THE LORD

Process together:

What does “joy in the Lord” mean to you?

Discuss:

1. Read John 15:9-17 together. How does Jesus describe the connection between love, obedience, and joy? How might it require courage to live out what Jesus is asking? (p. 53)
2. Have you ever been afraid of what others might think about the way you worship? How does that affect your ability to connect with God? (p. 58)
3. Read Matthew 6:19-21 together. What did Jesus say would happen to our earthly treasures? Have you experienced something that was once a source of pleasure becoming a source of pain?
4. In Psalm 16, what are some of the ways the author finds joy in the Lord?
5. Have you ever found joy somewhere completely unexpected? Describe where you found it and how that made you feel. (p. 76)

Pray:

Ask God to help you have eyes to see every bit of joy He has for you. Thank God for all the big and small ways He brings you joy.

Meditate:

“This is the day the LORD has made; let’s rejoice and be glad in it.”
—Psalm 118:24



WEEK 3: JOY IN WHO GOD MADE YOU TO BE

Process together:

How does thinking about the way God made you draw you closer to Him?

Discuss:


1. Have you taken tests or read books to discover your personality type? What did you learn about yourself? Which parts of the way God made you bring you the most joy? (p. 85)
2. Read Ephesians 2:10 together. What good works were you created to do? (p. 91)
3. Genesis 1:27 says that God created all people in His own image. What does that tell you about what determines each person's worthiness to be loved? (p. 98)
4. Read 1 Peter 3:14-15 together. What would you say to someone who asks where your joy comes from? (p. 107)
5. Read Proverbs 31:30 together. As you think about the value God places on our physical appearance versus how much He values our heart, do you feel encouraged or discouraged? (p. 112)

Pray:

Ask God to help you remember that you and those around you are created in His image. Praise God for His creativity and steadfast love.

Meditate:

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
—Psalm 139:13-14



WEEK 4: JOY IN THE GOOD TIMES

Process together:

How do you make joy a daily practice?

Discuss:

1. Read 2 Samuel 6:1-19 together in the NIV translation. How do these verses say that David and the Israelites celebrated? (p. 119)
2. Read Lamentations 3:22-26 together. What does it mean to believe the Lord's mercies never end? How has God's faithful love kept you from harm or despair? (p. 125)
3. Think about a time when you celebrated in an unusual way—either in what you were celebrating or how you celebrated. What about that experience gave you the most joy? (p. 130)
4. What is your favorite way to enjoy God's creation? Share your praise for the beauty of what God has made around you. (p. 139)
5. Read Psalm 100 together. How does this psalm minister to your soul? (p. 140)

Pray:

Thank God for never giving up on you. Ask Him to help you find joy this week and hold onto it.

Meditate:

“But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy.”
—Psalm 5:11



WEEK 5: JOY IN THE BAD TIMES

Process together:

How have you found joy in the midst of your grief?

Discuss:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 together in the New International Reader's Version. How does this translation change or add to your understanding of Paul's message here? (p. 155)
2. Have you ever had a hard time worshiping during a difficult or painful season? What happened when you were finally able to surrender and sacrifice your praise and your pain to God? (p. 158)
3. Read Jeremiah 29:10-14 together. What do these promises from God—originally given to the Israelites living in exile—say about our own difficult circumstances? (p. 167)
4. What is one thing you can do today to bring your focus back to the Lord and His provision for you? How might this increase your courage and trust in His plans for you in this life? (p. 174)
5. Have you ever felt overwhelmed about either your own sin or the reality of living in a sinful world? Read John 3:17 together. How do these words bring you comfort and joy? (p. 178)

Pray:

Ask God to bring to mind any areas you might need to declutter in your life and heart. Pray together with your group about the steps you can take to experience freedom from internal clutter.

Meditate:

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

—Philippians 4:7



WEEK 6: JOY IN COMMUNITY

Process together:

How have you experienced division in your own communities this year?

Discuss:

1. Read Jeremiah 22:3 and Micah 6:8 together. What would it look like to implement these instructions in your community? (p. 185)
2. What does it look like in your life to show up for a friend? When have you received the sweet gift of celebration and support from friends or family? How did that make you feel? (p. 192)
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 together. Think about the body of believers you currently worship with on a regular basis. Is it a diverse group reflecting the body of Christ? (p. 199)
4. Read about Miriam (Exodus 15:19-21) and David (2 Samuel 6:14-15). How will you use their examples and what you've learned in this study to pursue joy by serving and worshiping God in community with others? (p. 208)
5. Have you ever struggled to celebrate someone's good news because of the pain it caused you? How did you handle those competing emotions? (p. 210)

Pray:

Ask God for forgiveness for the times you have been bitter or envious of others instead of rejoicing together. Reflect on and thank God for all you have learned throughout these past six weeks.

Meditate:

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another.”

—Hebrews 10:24-25

Friends, it's been a gift to journey with you through *Courageous Joy*.

Courage comes from Christ. As we have learned, we can truly count it all joy, and find joy so abundant that we are compelled to share it with others.

Let's keep discovering joy in Jesus through every season!

We hope you will join us for our next (in)courage Bible study,
Courageous Influence!

