

ADVENT

Leader Conversation Guide – Advent: Joy

Main Idea

This week, Pam Seaburg shared an uplifting message on the theme of joy as we continue through the Advent season. She reminded us that joy is not a fleeting emotion like happiness but a deep, supernatural strength that sustains us through life's challenges (Isaiah 40:31). Drawing from the parables in Luke 15, Pam emphasized God's heart for restoration and the profound joy that comes when the lost are found. She encouraged us to actively participate in God's work by leaving behind negativity, searching for His light, and preparing our hearts to embrace joy, even in seasons of loss. As we engage in this discussion, let's reflect on how God's joy can transform our perspective and bring renewal to our souls this Advent season.

**Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.**

PSALM 13:3

Make It Practical:

Happiness vs. Joy:

- Happiness is fleeting and based on circumstances.
- Joy is a continual, supernatural strength that sustains us during trials.

The Progression of Loss and Joy (Luke 15):

- Loss: Each parable reflects a different type of loss (identity, significance, honor).
- Participation: Restoration requires action—leaving, searching, and preparing.
- Celebration: Joy is found and shared when what was lost is restored.

How We Participate with God in Loss:

- Leave: Let go of denial, isolation, and negative thinking.
- Search: Seek God's presence and guidance.
- Prepare: Embrace trials as opportunities to grow and experience deeper joy.

Talk About It

Leaving Behind Negative Thinking

- In Luke 15, we see examples of individuals leaving their current state to restore joy. In your own life, what types of incorrect or negative thinking might you need to leave behind to experience joy fully, even during a season of loss?

Actively Searching for Joy

- Reflect on Psalm 13:3, which speaks of seeking God for guidance and renewal. In what areas of your life do you feel called to search for joy actively, and how might that search look in practice?

Preparing for Joy Amid Trials

- James 1:2-4 encourages believers to embrace trials as opportunities for growth and joy. How can you prepare your heart and mindset to welcome joy, even while enduring challenging circumstances?

Joy: a continual, supernatural sustaining of our souls in seasons of heartache, injustice, and sorrow.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being a God who seeks us, finds us, and rejoices over us. In seasons of loss, help us to leave behind negative thoughts, search for Your truth, and prepare our hearts for the joy You promise. Holy Spirit, strengthen us to trust You in every trial, knowing that Your joy sustains us. May we celebrate Your goodness together and reflect Your love to others. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Leader Tip

Christmas Eve Services are happening on December 23rd and 24th!