



# home groups

*Discussion Guide*



## Learning To Experience Joy

*Psalm 16:11*

### Ice Breaker

*(5 minutes)*

#### **Discuss**

- Who's your favorite comedian? Can you tell any of their jokes?
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### Lesson Review

*(45 minutes)*

Barry defined joy with a story — the deep feeling of happiness he and Kim experienced at the birth of their first child. Our walk with God can inspire that same kind of soul-stirring joy. But there are three things that commonly rob us of that joy.

## **Our Insatiable Longings**

We have deep longings for security, identity and meaning, and we too often try to fill those needs with possessions, accomplishments, relationships, pleasure, or other earthly pursuits. *But we find deepest joy when we learn that God alone can satisfy our deepest longings.*

**Read Psalm 16:11, 32:11, and 68:3**

### **Discuss**

- What do you long for?

## **Our Unshakable Fears**

**Read Psalm 28:7 and Luke 12:32**

When David called God his shield, that was a powerful metaphor for him. David was a warrior. He knew what it felt like for an arrow or a sword to strike a shield in his hand. For David, a shield was a life-saving thing. And he related that life-saving thing with joy. Barry said joy and fear cannot coexist. *We find deepest joy when we learn that God alone can calm our deepest fears.*

Barry read part of a blog post by Jennie Allen about a child's fear of his asthma.

*My heart broke- this wasn't childhood fantasy fear- this was real life fear. This is his everyday fear- no air-feeling helpless. This isn't a fear I can scratch his back and say, "Monsters aren't real- go back to bed." This is his reality. This monster is real.*

### **Discuss**

- Barry said, "Some of you know real monsters." What's yours?

## **Our Incapacitating Pain**

Barry remembered a scene in his life during a series of tragic events. After losing his brother-in-law and receiving his sister's cancer diagnosis, Barry was on his way to another doctor's appointment and he found himself stuck in front of an elevator. He couldn't make himself push the elevator button.

David experienced his share of pain, too. Barry made a list:

- Living on the run from King Saul, hiding in caves and wilderness.
- The death of his best friend Jonathan.
- Moral failure with Bathsheba and the resulting shame.
- The death of his infant child.
- Betrayal by his adult son.

But unlike joy and fear, joy and pain can coexist easily.

### **Read Psalm 30:5 & 11**

Barry quoted lyrics from the late Rich Mullins:

*Joy and sorrow are this ocean  
And in their every ebb and flow  
Now the Lord a door has opened  
That all Hell could never close  
Here I'm tested and made worthy  
Tossed about but lifted up  
In the reckless raging fury  
That they call the love of God*

Barry said *we find deepest joy when we learn that God alone can comfort our deepest pain.*

### **Discuss**

- Do you identify with Barry and David? What has been your deepest pain?
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## **Application**

*(10 minutes)*

### **Discuss**

- How's your "joy level"? Are you joyful person?
- Which of these three factors — longing, fear, or pain — most often robs you of finding newborn-proud-parent-soul-stirring joy in your walk with God?

