

Sunday Sermon — Discussion Guide: Seth Kittinger, 12-13-20

The Advent of the Kingdom: Joy

1/3 — Looking Back

Start with prayer and/or worship (reading a Psalm, singing a song, giving thanks, etc.). Re-cast the vision (see example video [here](#)), review obedience goals from the previous week, and ask how everybody is doing. Check-in question options:

- Up/In/Out — How are you doing in your three primary relational spheres? (Up: *God*. In: *fellow believers and family*. Out: *unbelievers*)
- Highs/Lows: What was your “high” and your “low” from the past week?

2/3 — Looking to Jesus in the Present

Explore this Scripture passage together: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- As the facilitator, first read the passages aloud and invite the other members of the group to just listen and take note of what stands out to them. You may want to read this more than once.
- Discuss the question: “*what do we learn from these passages about who God is and what He does?*”
- Discuss the question: “*what do we learn from these passages about who we are and what we do?*”
- Alternative question: “*what do we learn from this passage about how the joy of Christ can be formed in us?*”

3/3 — Looking Forward

Ask Jesus how he wants you to respond (corporately and individually) to what you have heard and learned. You can also practice the following exercise:

- Sit quietly together in Jesus’ presence and ask yourself the question, “*Is my life currently characterized by the joy of Christ, by the glad awareness of His grace toward me?*” Pay special attention to whatever thoughts or feelings surface in your mind and heart, and remain open to however the Spirit may want to speak to you through them. Reflect on what changes you may need to make in your life if the things you have discussed are actually true. Does your current lifestyle—the way you *think, speak, act, and live* overall—demonstrate to a watching world that you are truly a citizen of a different Kingdom, one that is characterized by genuine *joy*? After some time of personal reflection, share your thoughts with one another as a group. End your time by praying together, repenting if needed, and asking Jesus to continue establishing your hearts in the joy that only He can give.