

INTRO

How would you describe Joy?

IDEA 1

How have you experienced Gospel Joy as present, available, and transformational in your life?

How can the advent season help you remember that joy is present, available, and transformational?

IDEA 2

We want our faith to have formulas. Brian described two faith formulas. The first was:

Obedience + integrity = blessing

We want it to come with real-world guarantees. IF I obey and live well, THEN God makes it better.

How have you leaned into this formula in your life?

As much as we want to believe that first formula, it doesn't work.

The advent story reveals that our faith follows a different formula:

Obedience + integrity = chaos

So, how can joy be transformational if it doesn't transform our circumstances?

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER

Brian shared that just like prayers before meals can become mindless, memorized and mechanical, so can advent—we go through the motions to get to the good part (the gifts). But it shouldn't be this way. Just like saying "grace" is meant to remind us that one day we get to be a part of the great feast, Advent should not only cause us to be thankful and joyful because Christ came, but it is also meant to have us look forward. Christ is coming again, once and for all, to establish His eternal kingdom, when all will be made right. This is our guarantee. This is our joy.

As a group, spend some time to pray together in thankfulness for Christ's first coming and the hope we have for his second coming and the joy that this gives us.

You could start the prayer time by using the prompt: Jesus, thank you for coming to earth as a baby and all that it means for me. I am thankful because...

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Brian gave three ways we can grow in joy:

- Tell the story
- Think about the story often
- Rejoice

What could it look like for you to lean into those three steps this week? Make note of how you notice joy growing in your life.