

PASSION AND POWER

SESSION 2: WHAT IS TRUE JOY?

Welcome to the second day of this retreat experience! Today we will explore the differences between happiness and joy and how that accompanies our suffering and gives us new power to move beyond our struggles and find peace and direction in our lives.

PRAYER: GUIDED MEDITATION

In the video, there will be a time just after a guided meditation where the students will have an opportunity to journal, for which we have provided the prompt below:

Spend some time continuing your conversation with Jesus. Where do you want your joy to come from?

ACTIVITY: HAPPINESS VS JOY

In this activity, think about your life and your future choices. As you read the following prompts, consider whether the activity or prompt listed will bring you temporary happiness or lasting joy in your life. Circle the word that you choose. When you have finished, please stand up.

Once the students are standing, you can begin facilitating the activity. The goal of the activity is to stress the difference between things bringing us temporary happiness and allowing us to experience joy more fully. We have formed the prompts and questions around their future plans and life goals so they can begin to think a bit about what their motivations are and consider that joy is still possible even when we are not happy. For each prompt, ask people to stand up if they indicated that they would get to joy because of the prompt. Challenge them to remain standing as long as they still think the prompt will bring them joy as you ask them questions about the challenges they may face and that may cause them unhappiness. Feel free to ask however many of them as you wish.

PROMPTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Being a professional athlete.
 - a. **Would you be willing to put every effort into rigorous practices and workouts year-round?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to adhere to a strict diet in order to maintain a specific weight as required by a coach or physical trainer?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to have every move you make judged by a TV commentator who was never able to make it as a professional athlete?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to travel a lot, potentially being away from home 50-75% of the year?**
2. Being a famous actor/actress.
 - a. **Would you be willing to take the most insignificant roles in order to make yourself more visible?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to memorize and rehearse the same lines over and over again until you have done them to the director's approval?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to live with very little income until you finally find the one role that makes you wanted by all other directors, even if that role doesn't come until you are much older?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to be known by your character role and not by your own self?**
3. Being an artist.
 - a. **Would you be willing to put your heart and soul into your art, potentially exposing your thoughts, beliefs, and opinions of yourself, the people around you, and the entire world?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to be criticized by those of any level of artistic ability, or by those who have no idea what the piece means to you?**

- c. **Would you be willing to spend days, months, or even years on a piece that ends up being rejected?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to live with very little income until you finally make the one piece that sells and makes you famous, even if that piece doesn't sell until you are much older?**
- 4. **Being a husband or wife?**
 - a. **Would you be willing to share life equally with one other person for the rest of your life, always keeping the needs of that person in mind whenever you make decisions?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to adjust your life because of your spouse? (ie. quitting your job and moving to another state, visiting your spouse's family on a holiday and not your own, etc)**
 - c. **Would you be willing to come home every day to the same person... having dinner together, praying together, sharing living space?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to do work around the house that neither of you enjoy in order to keep the house running?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to support your spouse in his/her job by attending various events and listening to them as they process their day?**
- 5. **Being a religious sister or brother.**
 - a. **Would you be willing to include the good of your community in all of your decisions?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to live on small personal budget and share a house budget for food/supplies?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to have a standard prayer/cooking/cleaning schedule within your house?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to focus on ministering to multiple people over having a relationship with one?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to devote a good amount of time to prayer each day?**
- 6. **Being a priest.**
 - a. **Would you be willing to include the good of your parish in all of your decisions?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to be on call 24/7 for parishioners who are seriously sick and suffering?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to wear a variety of hats (banker, counselor, teacher, boss, etc)?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to devote a good amount of time to prayer each day?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to speak and preach in front of people daily?**
- 7. **Working on a computer all day.**
 - a. **Would you be willing to sit and look at screen for a minimum of eight hours each day?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to work overtime in order to meet a deadline?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to attend meetings from the same chair you work in every day?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to communicate primarily through email and/or instant message?**

- e. **Would you be willing to motivate yourself to work on various assignments based on their deadlines?**
8. Working with customers all or most of your day.
- a. **Would you be willing to be interrupted by a phone call or a live person regularly?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to be kind to people who are angry about something you have no control over?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to answer the same question multiple times for different people?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to dress business professional, business casual, or in some kind of uniform?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to constantly be a representative of the company you work for?**
9. Doing manual labor all day.
- a. **Would you be willing to bend and stretch regularly throughout an eight-hour workday?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to lift and/or use heavy objects regularly throughout an eight-hour workday?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to stand or walk for an eight-hour workday?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to work overtime hours to meet a deadline?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to work in various extremes in temperature?**
10. Maintaining deep friendships.
- a. **Would you be willing to work through arguments to keep a friendship going?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to give a little on your point of view in order to maintain a friendship?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to be with your friend while they are in a time of suffering?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to share your own suffering honestly and openly with your friend?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to rejoice with your friend when you are having a bad day?**
11. Going away to college.
- a. **Would you be willing to be away from your family for months at a time?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to be responsible for doing your homework and studying for tests?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to live with roommates who throw parties every week?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to share a small living space with someone you just met?**
12. Staying home for college.
- a. **Would you be willing to live with your parents throughout your college years?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to commute to school daily and pay for the gas?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to miss out on various last-minute parties on Friday night?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to miss out on a chance encounter with someone important?**

- e. **Would you be willing to limit your opportunity to be in a fraternity or sorority?**
13. Staying connected virtually through social media.
- a. **Would you be willing to read alternative and sometimes negative opinions constantly?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to allow others to comment on your life in any way they choose?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to spend multiple hours each day staring at a screen?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to see what all your friends are doing when you can't join in the fun?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to post your true beliefs online for anyone to read?**
14. Disconnecting from social media.
- a. **Would you be willing to not know what everyone of your friends are doing at all times?**
 - b. **Would you be willing to not know what everyone is laughing and joking about from time to time?**
 - c. **Would you be willing to find other ways to communicate with friends (ie. phone, in person, text)?**
 - d. **Would you be willing to have a difficult conversation in person without the protection of a screen?**
 - e. **Would you be willing to live with the words you speak without the ability to edit them after the fact?**

Invite the students to think about the different challenges in these life decisions. Each of them have the potential to bring happiness or joy to our lives, but there are only so many things that we will be able to bear and suffer for the sake of that joy. Happiness, while fleeting, can be a powerful motivation. However, because it doesn't last, it can also be a bad thing to chase. Have the students consider why they find joy in different things and why they believe some of these prompts may bring them joy. Have them consider their motivations and reasons to do so. Here are some questions to guide your discussion:

1. **Was there a struggle that made you waver in your decision to remain standing?**
 - a. **Why do you believe this item is so important to you?**
 - b. **Were there any items that you initially thought would bring you joy, but after considering the possible struggles, you decided to sit down?**
2. **What struggles were you willing to accept?**
3. **What struggle made you change your mind?**
4. **What do you think will bring about the most joy in your own personal life?**
5. **Is there something that was not included that would bring you joy? Why?**

Following the short discussion, the students can take some time to journal with the questions we have provided them below:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS AFTER THE ACTIVITY

Give the students a few minutes to reflect on the following questions. During their reflection or after they have finished, feel free to play “Joy” by For King & Country:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-r7ogDaaEQ>

In what ways would you say that joy and happiness are similar?

How has the difference between joy and happiness been explained in this retreat so far?

Do you agree with the distinction between the two?

Do you have any other ideas regarding how the two are different?

How will the following affect any upcoming decisions you have to make in your life...?

A new understanding of what you are willing to suffer through.

A greater idea of what you are willing to suffer for?

A greater understanding of joy and happiness.

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