



Auburn, Alabama

**Growth Groups
Travel Guide
Week of May 27- June 2, 2007**

This is our transition week before our upcoming “Overflow” series in Philippians. It is also our transition week between our Spring and Summer Growth Groups. Our new group launches this week. We will begin our relaxed summer schedule next week. Here’s the summer Growth Groups schedule:

Sunday Groups	Wednesday Groups
June 3, 17	June 6, 20
July 15, 29 (Church-wide Event on July 4)	July 4 (Church-wide event), 18
August 12 (Fall Kick-off?), 19, 26	August 1, 15 (Fall Kick-off?), 22, 29

- **When someone mentions the word “Joy” what is the first thing that comes to mind? Is it a person? A song? Some other word often associated with joy? Why do you think this is the first thing you think about?**
- **One of the key lessons in our upcoming series is that there is a difference between “Happiness” and “Joy.” How would you define this difference?**
- ***Read 1 Thes. 6:16-18(NLT) “Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” What does this verse tell us about the relationship between joy, prayer, thankfulness, circumstances, and our relationship with God?***
- **You can not always control your feelings in circumstances, but you can always choose your attitude and response. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**
- ***Review 1 Thes. 6:16-18 (above). In this passage, Paul gives us commands to be joyful, to pray, and to be thankful in all circumstances. We can obviously choose to pray or not to pray, but joy and thankfulness are attitudes. What does this tell us about our ability to choose our attitudes and responses to circumstances?***
- **Our passage for this week also teaches us that these attitudes are God’s will for us as Christ-followers. Apart from a relationship with Christ, having a proper attitude and response can be impossible (*Romans 15:13*). As we look forward to the coming “Overflow” series, what circumstances in your life are keeping you from living a fully joy-filled life?**
- **How can your Growth Group pray for you as we enter into this new series, so you can overcome these circumstances?**



**Growth Groups
Leader's Travel Guide
Week of May 27- June 2, 2007**

Hey folks!

This is going to be an awesome week at Journey! We are launching a new Growth Group. We are making a transition to our summer schedule. AND, we are using the opportunity to preview our upcoming "Overflow" series.

By having a preview week, I think we can start getting people thinking about how this series is going to impact their lives and the life of Journey Church. If we can get people thinking, we can get them excited about what God is going to do. We can start praying together for personal needs, and we will be able to measure the results at the end of the series.

As you work through the Travel Guide, be pointing everything your group talks about toward overcoming circumstances and living a life dependent upon the Holy Spirit, and with a God-given positive (joyful) attitude no matter what life throws at us. Encourage your folks to open up, be honest, and to share their struggles, so that you and the entire group can be praying for each other throughout the Overflow series.

For the couples' groups, I have included an opportunity to multiply your leadership by dividing up your group for prayer and application at the end of the discussion. Be sure to have a Gal leader ready before your group meets!

Have a great week, and a great time in your groups!

Andrew

Summer Schedule Review:

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- **When someone mentions the word “Joy” what is the first thing that comes to mind? Is it a person? A song? Some other word often associated with joy? Why do you think this is the first thing you think about?**

This is meant to be an “Ice-breaker” question related to the topic. Honestly, it’s kinda selfish from me, because I just always think about the Ren and Stimpy “Happy Happy Joy Joy” song. I’m a musical person and things like that just stick with me. I guess it’s also because I find it amusing that they equate the two, but the entire series we are entering into has a primary point that one is a feeling and the other is an attitude. One is dependent on circumstances, the other is how we overcome them.

However, it might also be a great way to begin the discussion in your group. Someone might have a picture of some person in their life that just exemplified Joy. This could be a great way to start the discussion. Also, if people start associating it with perceived synonyms such as “Happiness,” you will be set up for a transition into the discussion . . . How easy it would be to say, “Some of you made a connection between joy and happiness . . . let’s see what we can learn about this connection . . .”

- **One of the key lessons in our upcoming series is that there is a difference between “Happiness” and “Joy.” How would you define this difference?**

Don’t dictate the answer to this question yet. The point of this discussion is to answer this question through our key scripture passage. However, you will get an opportunity to hear how much your group already understands about this topic. Encourage everyone to give a response.

BTW - The answer we are looking for by the end of the discussion is that “Happiness” is a feeling and is dependent upon circumstances, but “Joy” is an attitude that we choose in the power of the Holy Spirit, despite any circumstances. Remember this and use it as a way to guide your discussion . . . just don’t give it away yet, let’s discover it . . .

- ***Read 1 Thes. 6:16-18(NLT) “Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” What does this verse tell us about the relationship between joy, prayer, thankfulness, circumstances, and our relationship with God?***

Ultimately, what we are looking for here is that Joy, Prayer, and thankfulness are not dependent on circumstances, but are fully dependent upon a relationship with God. Also, the verse is telling us that God wants us to be Joyful, Praying, and Thankful. This leads us into the next question . . .

- **You can not always control your feelings in circumstances, but you can always choose your attitude and response. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

Again, don’t embarrass anyone if they disagree here, but hopefully by now they are starting to catch on. For the most part, let your folks give their response and let the next question be a response to them. Let the responses here help you know how to proceed into the rest of the discussion. If the general consensus is that the statement is true, it will make this transition easier. If some folks disagree with the statement, the rest of the discussion will be critical to both you as a leader and to them as they learn.

- **Review 1 Thes. 6:16-18 (above). In this passage, Paul gives us commands to be joyful, to pray, and to be thankful in all circumstances. We can obviously choose to pray or not to pray, but joy and thankfulness are attitudes. What does this tell us about our ability to choose our attitudes and responses to circumstances?**

If your folks don't quite understand this question, you can re-ask it in a different way . . . "Would God ever command us to do something that He doesn't give us the ability to do?" (NO!) Therefore, we must be able to choose our attitudes. Ultimately, we can ALWAYS choose to be joyful, and we can ALWAYS choose to be thankful, no matter what our circumstances.

**** At this point, I suggest that couples' groups divide into separate Guys and Gals groups to talk about the rest of the questions and to pray together. Before you meet for Growth Group, be sure to have a Gal in your group ready to lead the rest of the discussion. Give her a Leaders' Guide ahead of time, and do whatever you need to do to equip her before you begin.**

- **Our passage for this week also teaches us that these attitudes are God's will for us as Christ-followers. Apart from a relationship with Christ, having a proper attitude and response can be impossible (Romans 15:13). As we look forward to the coming "Overflow" series, what circumstances in your life are keeping you from living a fully joy-filled life?**

The verse from Romans is meant to teach us that the only way to truly live a Joyful, Thankful life is in a relationship with God, and when we are dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Our prayer as a group needs to be that all of us would learn to be "in touch with God" and be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage your folks to talk about what they are struggling with right now. Ask them what things in their life, jobs, school, family, friends, etc. are hard to keep a positive attitude about. Let them know that the goal of this question is to allow the group to pray for each other through the course of the coming series. If we know ahead of time, we can pray expecting results, and we can see measurable results when it is done.

- **How can your Growth Group pray for you as we enter into this new series, so you can overcome these circumstances?**

Take some time as a group to pray for anything that has been shared. Encourage your folks to pray specifically and expectantly. **Encourage your folks to not necessarily pray for the circumstances to change, but to pray that God gives them the ability to have a right attitude within the circumstances.** Pray that the coming series teaches us to be dependent on and to be in-tune with the Holy Spirit.