

## But the Fruit of the Spirit is: **JOY**

### ON YOUR OWN:

1. Read Psalm 100.
2. Think back on your life as a couple. How has the Lord shown His faithfulness to you? Try to come up with specific examples.
3. Spend time praising the Lord for His faithfulness.
4. Pray for you and your spouse to be able to experience the joy of the Lord in your lives.

### TOGETHER:

1. Read Nehemiah 8:8-12 together.
2. Why were the people so upset? How did Nehemiah respond to them? Why do you think he responded in that way?
3. According to Nehemiah 8:10, where do we get strength? How do you think this happens?

The Bible tells us that the JOY of the Lord is our strength! No matter what is going on in our lives, if we learn to live in God's joy, we will have the strength we need to persevere. This is true in our marriages, too. If we can learn to live in JOY, we can handle any stress that may come our way. The question is, how do we experience the joy of the Lord?

4. So, what do you think? What are some ways that the two of you can experience the joy of the Lord in your marriage?

One way that I can think of is to live in an attitude of praise. Spend time together PRAISING the Lord. Take some time out of each week to sit together and focus on the ways the Lord has been faithful to you the previous week, and then praise Him for it. Offer praise together on a consistent basis!

5. Read Psalm 100 together and share the answers that you came up with on your own of ways the Lord has been faithful to you.
6. Here are some songs that might help you as well.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE\\_IRI0E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRI0E) (10,000 Reasons by Matt Redman)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsfC2V2s\\_rg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsfC2V2s_rg) (There is Joy in the Lord by Cheri Keaggy)

FOR FURTHER FUN:

1. Psalm 100:2 says, "Serve the Lord with gladness". Another way to experience joy in your marriage is to serve together. Find a way to serve together this week! (Examples: Visit a nursing home together, serve at a soup kitchen, babysit for a needy family, make a meal for someone who is sick . . . the list could go on and on. The important thing is that it is both of you serving – do this TOGETHER!!)

2. An old acronym I once learned was "JOY = Jesus first, Others second, Yourself third." Try practicing this in your marriage this week. Look for ways to put your spouse's needs before yours! (Note: We sing this song with our kids at church, so I couldn't help but include it here. Watch it and try singing it together . . . it might just make you LAUGH!!!)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCqXk9uCOpY> (J is for Jesus)

3. Sit together and SMILE!! Remind each other of the fun times you've had in your marriage. Think back to your dating days and share experiences you remember that made you laugh. If you have kids, share some of these experiences with your kids and LAUGH together!!)

4. If you are going through a difficult patch in your marriage right now, be encouraged! Do not confuse happiness with joy. Happiness is a feeling that comes and goes based on circumstances, but joy is much deeper than that! Our joy is directly related to our dependence on God – spend time praying together for the difficulties in your marriage and then turn your focus entirely on God and PRAISE Him together!

5. But, since it is fun to laugh in your marriage, find a children's joke book and read it outloud to one another. (Or try writing some of your own jokes. Try to outdo one another in silliness!!)