Key questions for additional eGroup discussion:

- What is controlling your joy?
- How do we access the joy that we already have?
- How do we prevent circumstances from controlling our joy?
- How do we build up the required discipline so that we are not swept up in our transient and fleeting emotions?
- How do we allow “pure joy” in our life?

Pastor Steven’s 1 Peter 3:15 hi-lites from this sermon:

- Are we only going to clean up crap this year or are we going to finally fix the septic system?
- For you to start this year thinking that there’s a future version of you that God will like more - or a future version of you that can be happier - is to negate the very nature of the Lord that you came to celebrate today - Because Jesus came not to require righteousness but to enable righteousness.
- Today’s discussion will probably not afford you the opportunity to have more joy but to teach you how to access the joy that is available to you today.
- A temptation is something you should resist and a pattern you should avoid - to become aware of the self-sabotaging habits is good thing - whether in the form of an addiction or compulsion - this includes resisting 10,000 times until you see the one helpful ray of light pointing you toward victory.
- Yet when we face a trial, God offers, not a method of resistance, but acceptance. This is an important distinction because if we don’t understand the demonstrated temptation as a trial we will resist what we should accept and accept what we should resist. And we need the wisdom of God to know the difference - to access his spirit and seek the confirmation found only in community - to show us the difference between what we should resist and what we should accept.
- We all want the joy that runs over and doesn’t run out.
- Here Jesus gives us a position that is so countercultural it takes us a few minutes to fully understand it. And when we speak of pure joy as stated in James it’s almost a grammatical violation. James tells us to count all forms of joy. When we consider what is coming into our life and what is going out of our life (like an income statement or financial statement), some of the things that we put in the expense column are really investments. Investments into the purpose of God – provided that you allow perseverance to do what it is supposed to do - and we allow joy to be fully realized in your life.
- Joy is controlled by priorities.
- When Jesus was on the cross, Scripture says that he endured it. He did not enjoy it. But the joy set before him while he was on the cross, he saw the joy (the promise) that he did not enjoy. This is why joy is much different than pleasure. Because some of your deepest pain will produce some of your greatest joy. Some of your greatest pleasure will destroy your joy. Some of the things we chase destroy joy while increasing our pleasure.
- Joy is not a feeling. Joy may produce a feeling - but it’s not a feeling, it’s a focus.
- Key point full: it’s never good to say: God, I need more of your presence - is not a question of God’s presence but more of a question of your being present with God. Are you present? Have you set joy before you - or are you still whip-lashed because of what’s beside you - or are you still paralyzed because of what’s behind you.
• Think of it this way full: if convenience is your priority should, then my joy is tied to my convenience. If your priority is acceptance from others - then your joy will be controlled by their acceptance. This is very dangerous - what happens if the other person doesn’t even like themselves? How are they going to give you joy while they are fighting their own battles? If your priority is recognition, then your joy is tied to whether someone appreciates you are not.

• If we have the right focus, joy is the byproduct of this.

• There is a type of fullness of joy that flows weather you feel it or not. There’s a bunch of fun joy that flows from a point of view not from a state of mind or a situation in life. And Jesus wants his joy to be in us so that we may be complete.

• Focusing on the wrong thing will only make you miserable and exhausted - where you are fighting things mentally that you are not even going through situationally - where you might be so depleted you can’t fight the real battles. So, God teach us priorities - so that we can have real and authentic joy.

Scripture:

• **Exodus 14:10 (NIV)**: 10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord.

• **Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)**: 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

• **James 1:2-5 (NIV)**: Trials and Temptations: 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

• **John 15:9-11 (NIV)**: 9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

• **Psalm 118:24**: The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.

Sermon notes from Pastor Furtick:

• Opening prayer and comments: Now that you are here what is his presence worth to you? What does it mean for you to be forgiven? What does it mean for you to be healed? What does it mean for you to have a personal relationship with God? Please take a few seconds to worship him - for what he is to you and for what he means to you - for all the things he’s done to you for you - for his exceeding greatness. So now Lord these are your people and we are in your presence - do what you want to do and have your way with us. Make the difference and do that thing that only you can do - where we are not the same when we leave. get down on the inside of us Lord where we need you the most. Lord thank you for the opportunity that we have now to come before a great king - to receive instruction, inspiration, and nourishment for soul.

• Welcome to week two of a series called flip the flow. Here’s a recap of “Flip The Flow” part 1:
  o Don’t fix things this year at the surface level.
  o Don’t fix things this year merely at the level that you see the problem.
  o Where something comes out is not usually where it came from.
  o And if we don’t get honest about what we need from God, we will spend another year mopping up the floor without finding the pipe that was broken - that was causing the leak to begin with.
  o Are we only going to clean up crap this year or are we going to finally fix the septic system?
• Ask this question: Where did it come from?
• This year we begin counting calories and counting carbs. Perhaps we should begin the new year by flipping the flow and counting what we put in our hearts?
• Because where it comes from determines what comes out of your heart
• For you to start this year thinking that there’s a future version of you that God will like more - or a future version of you that can be happier - is to negate the very nature of the Lord that you came to celebrate today - Because Jesus came not to require righteousness but to enable righteousness.
• Even if we go through the trial we know how this comes out because he who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it.

• It is a strange thing about praise - it works best in reverse. It works best when you praise God not by sight but by faith.
• Before I get started I want to share with you a story: when driving my Nissan Maxima my CD player stop working and would turn on and off by itself. I found the problem was that my children were playing with the backseat rear radio control – where they were having the time of their lives as a backseat DJ - where this is a profound lesson in not listening to backseat DJs.
• Only the driver can be the DJ.
• And this introduces the title of today’s sermon called “backseat DJs.”
• Let’s talk about the times in your life where your joy is being controlled by a backseat DJ. And this is not God.
• Pastor Furtick quote of the day: if I make the payments, then, I make the playlist.”
• What is controlling your joy today?
• As we know well, success and money do not equal more joy.
• More opportunity, achievement, and more people in my phone do not necessarily equal more joy.
• I am convinced that some people are genetically predisposed to have more joy - and I am not one of them.
• Today’s sermon is for the rest of us.
• See James 1:2-5
• **Today’s discussion will probably not afford you the opportunity to have more joy but to teach you how to access the joy that is available to you today.**
• First, we need to have a good understanding as to the distinctions of joy in the distinctions as to the types of trials.
• James tells us that there will be trials of many kinds. This is helpful since we are not always going through the same thing - we are all going through something.
• There are trials that are associated with failure and there are trials that are associated with success.
• There is a pressure associated with success that you will not experience in failure. And - there is an attack that you feel in failure that you do not experience during a season of success.
• There are certain trials that money brings - were not having money will not include.
• Some trials are easier to empathize with and generate more sympathy from people versus others depending on how visible they are. So, if you break your leg you see people will pray for you - but what about a mental health issue where we are broken inside - and there’s no visible cast?
• It’s important that we make a distinction between trials and temptations as well.
• They are not the same.
• The temptation comes from the devil and a trial is just a fabric of life. One comes from hell and comes to destroy your life - where a trial points you in a direction that strengthens your faith and increases your joy.
• **A temptation is something you should resist and a pattern you should avoid - to become aware of the self-sabotaging habits is good thing - whether in the form of an addiction or compulsion - this includes resisting 10,000 times until you see the one helpful ray of light pointing you toward victory.**
• When you face a temptation God commands resistance.
• Yet when we face a trial, God offers, not a method of resistance, but acceptance. This is an important distinction because if we don’t understand the demonstrated temptation as a trial we will resist what we should accept and accept what we should resist.
• And we need the wisdom of God to know the difference - to access his spirit and seek the confirmation found only in community - to show us the difference between what we should resist and what we should accept.
• Take the matter of contentment - sometimes we need to wait for this - and only God can show us the difference between a temptation and a trial.
• It’s a good habit to get into stop asking people to attempt to resolve the situation that they don’t have the capacity to fix.
• This is so important because it is not appropriate for me to merely pray away important parenting issues. We have to accept certain weaknesses of seasons we are in and learn to accept certain things. A Pastor Furtick Classic Consider adolescence – you can’t pray away hormonal increases.
• We therefore need to accept the weaknesses associated with certain seasons of our lives.
• Now let’s consider the distinction between joy and pleasure.
• We seem to be living in a culture that has the two confused.
• Have you ever given a thought that people think there’s something wrong with you if you’re not happy all the time? I think it has something to do a social media but not exclusively.
• There is the feeling that something is wrong with my faith if I don’t feel good all the time.
• In church signs don’t help the situation. Think about the cute signs we see at churches: No Jesus = no Joy. Or Know Jesus to know joy. What I lie this is. We can enjoy a lot of things without knowing Jesus. Spring break? Amen to that. We don’t have to be Christians to enjoy a crispy cream donut. A Pastor Furtick classic: Our taste buds don’t have to be sanctified to enjoy the cream filled donut or a Dorito.
• The Bible tells us to consider pure joy.
• The key phrase here is pure joy. This means that there are forms of joy that are diluted and polluted. The kind of joy that makes you feel good as long as it’s in your system. However, there’s another type of joy – similar to the pure oil in the lamp the offers brighter light and burns longer.
• We don’t want joy that is cosmetic in nature. We don’t want to kind of joy the last five minutes and makes us feel like hell in the morning after. We don’t want the kind of joy that makes us feel good when we are gossiping only because it makes us feel better about ourselves - only to realize that with there’s something wrong with our integrity.
• We all want the joy that runs over and doesn’t run out.
• In this depends on the direction of joy. See Hebrews chapter 12. When we expect joy to come in the wrong direction and we don’t know where to look, Hebrews chapter 12 offer some good guidance.
• The fruit of the spirit is the fullness of joy.
• Where living in a time where it we feel pressure in order to feel pleasure. For example we quit our job expecting to find joy in the next work location.
• Key point: your joy is your job
• We should not be disappointed but as you don’t find happiness in other people. It’s not part of their job description to keep you happy.
• Here Jesus gives us a position that is so countercultural it takes us a few minutes to fully understand it. And when we speak of pure joy as stated in James it’s almost a grammatical violation. James tells us to count all forms of joy. When we consider what is coming into our life and what is going out of our life (like an income statement or financial statement), some of the things that we put in the expense column are really
investments. Investments into the purpose of God – provided that you allow perseverance to do what it is supposed to do - and we allow joy to be fully realized in your life.

- But Hebrews 12 gives us a picture of Jesus and a kind of joy that isn’t necessarily pleasure. Pleasure can come with joy but joy is not dependent on pleasure. In Jesus proves this.
- So what is controlling your joy? The easy answer is found in Hebrews 12 is to jump towards Jesus. And it’s easy to shout this in church. This is the right answer but it’s not the real answer. Consider how you may have spoken to your children last week when you’re frustrated. If Jesus was truly controlling your joy you would not need 3 cups of coffee to ignite your joy in the morning.
- Jesus is the perfect are in Pioneer of our faith - for the joy is set before him.
- This is the direction of joy.
- It’s human nature to reflect on the past and attempt to find joy in the things that happened to you.
- Consider the parting of the Red Sea in Exodus before God flipped the flow. What was behind the Hebrew people could have killed them - if they let it.
- What is behind you cannot kill you unless you let it - unless you let it stop you or consume you.
- It is already paid in full in your ransom is already been purchased by the blood of Christ.
- Yet there such a tendency to often look in the rearview mirror and have this be a barrier to joy.
- How do I keep myself focused on joy when I’m preoccupied with what everybody else is doing around me?
- This is where we need to understand the direction by which joy really flows from.
- **Joy is controlled by priorities.**
  - Here’s the Oprah moment: I can’t necessarily choose joy. I can’t necessarily choose my feelings in any given moment. By the way I tried to do this for many years and was very counterproductive. I tried to make the choice to rejoice - however I ended up feeling worse - and even started to feel guilty where my joy was replaced with shame - on top of sadness. So now I went from no joy to being in debt to a deeper place of despondency.
  - **When Jesus was on the cross, Scripture says that he endured it. He did not enjoy it. But the joy set before him while he was on the cross, he saw the joy (the promise) that he did not enjoy. This is why joy is much different than pleasure.**
  - **Because some of your deepest pain will produce some of your greatest joy. Some of your greatest pleasure will destroy your joy. Some of the things we chase destroy joy while increasing our pleasure.**
  - James tells us to face our trials - not trying to pray them away but facing them - where the essence of faith is to know that the outcome will come from the trial - similar to the annealing of metal in a furnace – becoming stronger at higher temps – with the faith to know that the outcome is this: my character is going to be refined, and I only have what is real and genuine.
  - **Joy is not a feeling. Joy may produce a feeling - but it’s not a feeling, it’s a focus.**
  - We should be glad that joy is not feeling because we can’t count on our feelings. If it was only a feeling, we wouldn’t have faith in the pursuit of joy.
  - And if we accept that joy is a focus - we can take any situation in our life - and flip the flow and say this: for the joy that is been set before me I can make it through this situation.
  - We don’t have to wait for joy to come to us we can make it through.
  - How do we make joy? By focusing on what God is doing in our lives right now.
  - We are living in a time where there are many destroyers of joy - especially the destruction of joy by comparison - comparing yourself to others – where comparing yourself to what you’re supposed to be versus what God wanted you to be.
  - While scrolling on Facebook you are destroying your joy.
  - Another area is to look so far ahead and ignore what’s 3ft head of you, you deprive yourself of joy.
• Recall story of Pastor Furtick running into the back of another car while trying to look down at his GPS – in order to review three turns ahead of where he was traveling.
• This speaks of the importance of presence and priorities.
• In Psalm 16 David says that in your presence is the fullness of joy.
• I don’t know why I think that God can only be found in church. Isn’t God everywhere?
• As we sit here in church, God’s presence and his power might be stronger with a person confined to a hospital bed - where they can’t even move their body, but yet the spirit of God is speaking to their situation - strengthening them on the inside - were sitting in a hospital bed a person experiences more joy that a person sitting in the fourth row of this church.
• Key point full: it’s never good to say: God, I need more of your presence - is not a question of God’s presence but more of a question of your being present with God.
• Are you present?
• Have you set joy before you - or are you still so whip-lashed because of what’s beside you - or are you still paralyzed because of what’s behind you.
• Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that the things of the past and the things that are beside us are passengers and we are not the driver.
• You can ride but you can’t drive.
• I have learned that we cannot get rid of the bad feelings and all the negative emotions – and all of our perverse tendencies. I’m not always going to be totally able to eliminate fear. Take comfort in knowing that we can ride this bus but can’t drive it.
• The driver is the DJ and he’s making the playlist.
• Make a commitment this year to not let the things that are beside us are behind us drive the program.
• Are you letting something from the backseat control your joy?
• Are you letting the wrong priorities be the driver from the back seat?
• Think of it this way full: if convenience is your priority should, then my joy is tied to my convenience. If your priority is acceptance from others - then your joy will be controlled by their acceptance. This is very dangerous - what happens if the other person doesn’t even like themselves? How are they going to give you joy while they are fighting their own battles? If your priority is recognition, then your joy is tied to whether someone appreciates you (or not).
• Important point: your priorities control your joy - and we all have backseat DJs destroying our joy - something that is not supposed to be driving is controlling your joy - and remember that we talked about this last week - where this comes from determines how it comes out.
• Not only does where it comes from determine where it comes out (and how it comes out), but where it comes from determines when it runs out.
• When it comes to joy, there is a joy that is partial, temporary, unreliable, and unpredictable.
• However, there is another joy that Jesus spoke of - the kind of joy that we should be praying for in our lives.
• In fact, I stopped praying for joy a couple years ago - but rather I started praying for focus. If we have the right focus, joy is the byproduct of this.
• Now let’s talk about the duration of joy.
• It is possible that there is so much joy available to us – but, we are so focused on imaginary battles and on things that God is already doing in our lives - that we don’t experience what Jesus calls the fullness of joy.
• Not little drops of joy – where we are dependent on people’s reaffirmation of us - who dispense joy only through a syringe – and only when they feel like it.
• This is important point full: you can’t decide your joy. You do however can decide your priorities and your priorities control your joy.
• If your priority is being right - then your joy will be controlled and connected by the outcome associated with you being right. However, we don’t want to be right more than we have joy and We don’t want to prove that we are right more than we have joy.
• We all want real joy not surface level joy - lasting and abiding joy - that comes from Jesus - and to do that we have to abide in him.
• And sometimes you can’t see it on the surface.
• Sometimes it looks like joy on the surface – but it is merely a temporary façade.
• We are so good at crop and stuff -filtering stuff
• A pleasant family photo may not accurately reflect the fact that you’re having a good time and a sad photo may not reflect the fact that you are experiencing real joy.
• When you associate joy with a feeling - and we are trained to spot joy on the surface - we connect to things that cut off our joy.
• Jesus says I am the true vine and anything that is in Jesus that bears fruit, the farther will prune so we can grow more. God will prune but will not cut us away from the root system.
• There is a type of fullness of joy that flows weather you feel it or not. There’s a bunch of fun joy that flows from a point of view not from a state of mind or a situation in life.
• And the only way to have this joy is to have a particular focus.
• See John 15.
• And Jesus wants his joy to be in us so that we may be complete.
• And we all want a full inflowing joy.
• A joy that isn’t actually destroyed by trials - but is developed by trials.
• God is developing your capacity for joy right now - and we don’t necessarily feel this.
• It’s what you focus on.
• Focusing on the wrong thing will only make you miserable and exhausted - where you are fighting things mentally that you are not even going through situationally - where you might be so depleted you can’t fight the real battles. So, God teach us priorities - so that we can have real and authentic joy.
• Closing prayer: Do you see all the things that are fighting against your joy? God, in your presence is the fullness of joy. And Jesus already has given us this - with so much to rejoice in. As the song says: “this is the day that the Lord has made in our rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24).” Lord, thank you for our Savior today - where he did what he did not enjoy - but yet still found joy in it. We pray for those people that are experiencing tremendous blessings and an increase in favor and we thank you for that. May we see it for what it is and recognize it and be able to celebrate it. Everything good and perfect comes from you Lord. We also pray for those people that are going through trials as mentioned in James – Lord, you tell us that there comes things that test us in order to prove your presence - and if we let these things do what they’re supposed to do, they will produce in us a greater capacity for joy. Lord help us focus on the things that you’ve placed in front of us now - just the next thing - not the next thing leads the next thing that leads to the next thing - until we strategize ourselves into indigestion and ulcers. Lord we thank you for your presence today - in your presence there is fullness of joy.