



CHOOSE JOY

*Because Happiness
Isn't Enough*

KAY
WARREN

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Book Club Leader's Guide

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Choose Joy: Because Happiness Isn't Enough is an ideal choice for a book club or for personal study. In it, you'll discover what Kay learned on her search for soul-satisfying joy – the same joy that is available to you now, regardless of the circumstances your or your book club members may be facing.

The *Choose Joy* Book Club Leader's Guide will provide you with helpful tips on leading a book club, as well as provide six sessions of thought-provoking questions for you or the members to discuss.

Suggested Preparation

Begin with prayer. Prayer is a powerful and necessary part of learning new truths, applying what is learned, and creating new habits. Commit to praying for a group as it is formed, before each meeting, and during the week for each book club participant. Expect that everyone in the group will be significantly impacted by their experience through reading and discussing *Choose Joy*.

Develop relationships. Remember, change is meant to happen in the context of caring relationships. Consider contacting each book club member at least twice during the six weeks to encourage them (i.e., phone, email, in person or social media).

Lead with a humble and caring attitude. You agreed to lead the *Choose Joy* Book Club, hopefully because you've already read it and found it meaningful on your own spiritual and emotional journey toward joy. Your humble enthusiasm will create a friendly, accepting place for others to gain from reading and discussing *Choose Joy*.

Group Guidelines

Creating a Safe Environment

Confidentiality Under no circumstance should shared personal information be mentioned or discussed outside of the book club.

Book Club Member Responsibilities All members of the book club must commit to read the designated chapters before each meeting, including an agreement to read the introduction before the first meeting. Each member should commit to attending at least four of the six book club meetings.

Group Dynamics Your meetings should last no more than two hours. Limit the size to eight to ten participants so that each person has time to share something from their reading. Be aware of a book club member who might unintentionally dominate the discussion; ensure everyone is included. When someone answers a question, make an encouraging or affirming comment, but focus on allowing everyone to discover his or her own personal insights. Keep advice general; refrain from giving advice to specific individuals. Please remember a book club is not a support group.

Book Club Meetings

The First Meeting The first meeting serves as an introduction to *Choose Joy*, a get acquainted time, and an opportunity to set expectations and explain the guidelines about regular reading, attendance, and confidentiality (As needed, briefly refer to those guidelines over the course of your next five meetings). After the brief explanation of the book club, perhaps ask a member to read the first chapter aloud; take the first steps together into choosing joy!

Successive Meetings Begin your discussion time by asking the book club members what point in that week's reading is significant for them and why, giving each the opportunity to respond. Then read and discuss the questions indicated for the current week's assigned chapters. A suggested approach is to ask that each question be read aloud by a different person, and then give all the opportunity to respond. As the leader, please feel free to answer a question, to skip a question to spend more time on another, or to encourage group members to ask questions not listed in the *Choose Joy* Book Club Leader's Guide.

Lessons

WEEK ONE Introduction

1. Share your reasons for joining this book club. What do you hope to discover by week six?
2. Describe one of your life's sweetest moments—a time when your heart was overwhelmed with happiness. What feelings and thoughts do you remember?
3. Write your personal definition of the word “joy” and share it with the group. How do your definitions differ?
4. Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19 together. How do you think the author, Paul, would define joy? Discuss.

Takeaway Truth: Kay promises to be candid with you about her journey into joy, to expose her own doubts, failures, sins, and middle-of-the-night wrestlings with God. Pray this week, asking God to help you enter this book club with the same kind of transparency.

WEEK TWO Joy is my Inheritance *(Chapters 1-3)*

1. What is your response to this week's reading? What has encouraged and inspired you?
2. Do you tend to be a glass-half-full or a glass-half-empty kind of person? What do you allow to keep you from living a life of joy?
3. Answer honestly the questions Kay asks on page 37: Do you believe God smiles? Does he smile at YOU? What could your answers reveal about you? What could your answers reveal about your religious (or non-religious) experiences?
4. Which of the Bible stories that present Jesus as a man of joy mentioned in Chapter 3 is your favorite?
5. Imagine Jesus—a man of sorrows and joy—walking through life with you today. What might he laugh about with you? What would he cry over with you?

Takeaway Truth: Kay asks that before all else, you remember this: “Joy is a choice.” This week, how will you choose to experience the joy God created you for?

WEEK THREE Joy is a Conviction of my Mind *(Chapters 4-6)*

1. What is your response to this week's reading? What has encouraged and inspired you?
2. Is it a surprise to read that you can choose to think joyfully before you feel joyful (p. 61)? What does it mean to "count it all joy," as stated in James 1:2-4?
3. Have you experienced searching for joy and still remaining dry? Describe the "broken cisterns" or "false sources of joy" that have failed to satisfy in your life (p. 64).
4. Imagine and discuss a day in the life of a person who believes that God is the only true source of their joy. How might they respond when their car won't start, when their child brings home a bad report card, and when they get passed over for a promotion?
5. What is your reaction to reading that God offers us treasures in our darkest moments (Isaiah 45:3)? Think about a time of deep sorrow in your life. Did you uncover any treasures?

Takeaway Truth: Choose today to start new habits in your thinking. Meditate on who God is—his worth, Word, works, ways, and his will. Journal a few paragraphs about how these thoughts can lead to joy.

WEEK FOUR Joy is a Condition of my Heart *(Chapters 7-8)*

1. What is your response to this week's reading? What has encouraged and inspired you?
2. On page 115, Kay says that if we want joy, we must fight for it. In what specific ways can we experience joy if we make different choices in how we think, behave, feel and respond?
3. Is it difficult to believe that God delights in you and adores you? Why? Turn to the person to your left and tell them something about them you think delights the heart of God. (Examples: "You are the first one to offer help when someone else is in crisis," or "You have a grateful attitude.")
4. Read the paragraph in the middle of page 130, written by Kay's friend, Lynnda. Discuss what would change if you chose "peace instead of the rat race" in your life.
5. Share an experience in your life when someone genuinely heard you, validated you, and appreciated you. What feelings did the affirmation bring about?

Takeaway Truth: Mother Teresa said, "There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread." Determine three ways that you will nurture joy in someone else this week—be on the lookout for joy to return to you as you bless others.

WEEK FIVE Joy is a Choice of my Behavior (Chapters 9-11)

1. What is your response to this week's reading? What has encouraged and inspired you?
2. Kay's definition of joy includes a settled assurance about God, a quiet confidence in God, and a determined choice to give our praise to God in all things. Are any of these easier for you to embrace than another? Which are difficult? Why?
3. Sometimes we end up last on our own priority lists. In what ways can you begin to nourish—take care of, honor, and prioritize—your body, soul and spirit as pathways to joy?
4. What does it mean to live “in” and not “for” the moment (p. 196)? Describe the moment during this book club that has brought you the most joy so far.

Takeaway Truth: Reread the story of Corrie and Betsie ten Boom on pages 198–200. Then list the ways in which you will make “the choice to rejoice” in your life this week, regardless of the circumstances.

WEEK SIX Celebration of Joy

Use your five senses to create a celebration of joy for your final week! Plan a dinner or a dessert night for your book club and ask the members to be prepared to share the following:

1. As we end this book club discussion of *Choose Joy*, how has your perspective on soul-satisfying joy changed?
2. What are the three top joy-builders you will begin to use to expand joy in yourself and in others?
3. Spend time praying for each member of the book club and ask God to help each of you choose his joy no matter what life brings your way.

“Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things.”

—KAY WARREN

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This Book Club Leader's Guide is courtesy of Kay Warren, author of *Choose Joy: Because Happiness Isn't Enough*, © 2012, 2020 Revell. Kay's website is KayWarren.com, she is on Facebook at [Facebook.com/KayWarrensPage](https://www.facebook.com/KayWarrensPage), on Twitter at [KayWarren1](https://twitter.com/KayWarren1), and on Instagram at [KayWarren75](https://www.instagram.com/KayWarren75).