



THE HEART OF A METHODIST

STUDY GUIDE

Mark #2: Rejoices In God

Book: *Five Marks of a Methodist* by Steve Harper

SCRIPTURE

16 Rejoice always.

2 Thessalonians 5:16 (NRSV)

24 This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalms 118:24 (NRSV)

10 Don't be sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 (NRSV)

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God...**12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:8, 12 (NRSV)

STUDY & REFLECT/DISCUSS:

The Five Marks of a Methodist, Mark #2: Rejoices In God

Christians do not only believe that God exists, Christians love God. Joy flows from the love of God and joy is the strength of the Christian.

1. Wesley said, "God is the joy of his heart." **What brings you joy?**

2. The words, "rejoice" and "joy" are not used very much anymore in our modern language (written & oral). **What factors might be contributing to this?**

3. Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Strength to Love*, stated, "It takes strength to love, and the primary expression of strength is joy." It makes sense that the civil rights movement was comprised of both sermons and song and why the early Methodist movement included John Wesley the preacher and Charles Wesley the songwriter. Before Jesus and his disciples left the upper room after eating their last supper together, they sang a hymn (Matthew 26:30). **When has a song brought you joy and subsequent strength and peace when faced with a struggle?**

4. **What song(s) brings you joy when you hear it/sing it? It doesn't have to be a hymn or church song. God's truth is present in many forms of art (remember, prevenient grace from mark #1 – God's love goes before.)**

5. **What role does joy have in following Jesus?**

LIVING IT OUT

Read Luke 15, the parables of being lost and then found.

1. In each parable, the joy of being found is overwhelming. Being found is something to celebrate. **Share your story of being found by Jesus.**

2. **What are the characteristics of joy that you feel as a follower of Jesus?**

3. **How can we rejoice when Jesus finds others? How can we support and celebrate God's work of finding the lost?**

PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to grow your joy for the day that God has made and for God's work in the world. Ask God to increase your joy in the forms of strength, peace, and contentedness in the every day of life. Practicing rejoicing, thanking God for the good of God and God's creative and saving work in the world. Pray for each other, requests of the group or the "Prayer Corner" in the bulletin. Pray for the "empty chair," for those who are not yet with our group/our church. Thank God for the transforming work that God has done and is yet to do in our lives, families, the community, and the world.