

JOY

UNSPEAKABLE

Group Discussion Guide



8500 West 159th Street
Overland Park, KS 66223
913.814.7223
VisitGraceChurch.com

last update = **5Feb2016**

Joy Unspeakable

Group Discussion Guide

1-Unspeakable Joy of Love	2
2-Unspeakable Joy through History	4
3-Unspeakable Joy of Giving	6
4-Unspeakable Joy of Suffering	8
5-Unspeakable Joy of Sacrifice	10
6-Unspeakable Joy of Obedience	12
7-Unspeakable Joy of the Cross	14

Series Overview

True joy comes from our participation with and having fellowship with Jesus Christ in His sacrifice.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: **Joy Unspeakable**.

You may choose to use this guide:

- with your Grace Group.
- with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-*Unspeakable Joy of Love*

Scripture: [Luke 7:36-50](#)

Icebreaker: Favorite Love Songs

Make a list of your favorite love songs. For each one, tell why you like it. What about the lyrics do you like?

Discussion Questions

- Discuss how having someone forgive you stimulates a loving response from you ([Luke 7:47](#)).
 - ▶ In what way did the woman express her gratitude for forgiveness and her love of the One who forgave her ([Luke 7:36-50](#))?
 - ▶ In what ways could you express your gratitude for Christ's forgiveness and your love for Him?

- Faith and hope are extremely important to every Christ-follower. Discuss why Paul said love is greater than even faith and hope ([1Cor 13:13](#)).
 - ▶ [Romans 13:9-10](#)
 - ▶ [Matthew 22:37-39](#)

- If someone you loved was going to suffer greatly and die, what thoughts and feelings would you have when you learned about it? What counterintuitive view did Jesus help His followers embrace about His coming death ([John 14:27-28](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Love First

Consider the following passages about love being first.

Gal 5:22	Love is first in the list.
Phm 7	Paul found joy in how his friend demonstrated love.
1John 4:19	He loved us first.
1Pet 1:8	Your love of Christ results in unspeakable joy.

Application Exercise: Thank Him for Loving You

Pray, thanking God for loving you so much that He paid for it with His life. Ask that He continue to remind you of His love. Ask Him to show you how to demonstrate your love for Him and others.

2-*Unspeakable Joy through History*

Scripture: [Genesis 22](#)

Icebreaker: Why History?

Discuss your attitude toward studying history. Has your attitude about history changed over time? What are some reasons to study history?

Discussion Questions

- Tests from God help us know where we are spiritually. Which of the following tests that Abraham faced would be most difficult for you?
 - ▶ Leaving your home to go to a new land ([Gen 11:27-12:5](#))
 - ▶ Saying no to financial temptation ([Gen 14:17-24](#))
 - ▶ Sacrificing the person or thing of most value to you if God requested it ([Gen 22:1-2](#))

- Which of the following aspects of Abraham's trust in God do you most admire? He believed when he did not know:
 - ▶ Where ([Heb 11:8](#))
 - ▶ When ([Heb 11:9-10](#), [Heb 11:13-16](#))
 - ▶ How ([Heb 11:11-12](#))
 - ▶ Why ([Heb 11:17-19](#))

- Discuss what Abraham gained from surrendering everything to God. Which are the most meaningful to you personally?
 - ▶ Deeper sense of assurance of God's promises ([Gen 22:16-18](#))
 - ▶ Approval from God ([Gen 22:12](#))
 - ▶ Deeper love for God ([John 14:21-24](#), [Eph 3:14-21](#))

Dig a Little Deeper: Jehovah-jireh

Reflect on these thoughts about God providing.

Atonement is incomplete until God becomes the sacrifice.	Heb 10:4
All sacrifices between Genesis 3 and Matthew 27 are temporary.	Heb 10:11
There is no priest class before Exodus 28 or after Acts 2.	Heb 8:1-6
The entire body of Christ-followers are “priests” in the New Testament.	1Pet 2:5-10
Faithful people will accept God’s provision.	Rom 10:4 Heb 9:24-28 Heb 10

Application Exercise: Accepting His Provision

Tell God that you accept His provision. Be specific.

You may do this through prayer, a letter to God, or a song of praise to Him.

3-*Unspeakable Joy of Giving*

Scripture: [Luke 19:1-10](#)

Icebreaker: Meaning of a Quote

Discuss the meaning of the following quote.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.” -Jim Elliot

Discussion Questions

- What was the difference in attitude between the Pharisees and Zacchaeus ([Luke 19:1-10](#))? In what way did Zacchaeus' attitude about giving change? What changes in attitude have you noticed in those who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior?
- Discuss which of the following reasons for giving motivate you.

Gratitude for God's generosity	1Chr 29:14
Love for others	Luke 10:33-35
Obedience to God	Mal 3:8-10
For the sheer joy	2Cor 9:7

- In what ways does Christ model the joy of giving?
 - ▶ [2Corinthians 9:15](#)
 - ▶ [2Corinthians 8:9](#)
 - ▶ [Matthew 20:28](#)

Dig a Little Deeper: Blessings of Giving

Consider what these passages describe as the blessings of giving.

- **Acts 20:35**
- **Luke 6:38**
- **Proverbs 11:25**
- **Ecclesiastes 11:1**
- **Isaiah 58:10**

Application Exercise: Effects of Giving

Have you noticed any of the following effects when you give generously?

- Increased contentment (study 2006, National Institutes of Health, found that charitable giving released endorphins and oxytocin which created positive feelings)
- Improved physical health (Why Good Things Happen to Good People)
- More social connection (studies, Simpson & Willer)
- Increased gratitude (Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness)

From a spiritual perspective, why do you think giving has those effects on people?

4-*Unspeakable Joy of Suffering*

Scripture: [Luke 22:33-34](#), [54-62](#)

Icebreaker: Short-term vs. Long-term

Make a list of things that are pleasant short-term which undermine long-term benefits. (physical and spiritual)

Discussion Questions

- Which of the following is a greater blessing ([1Pet 4:12-16](#))?
 - ▶ A carefree life with no eternal value
 - ▶ Suffering packed with God's promises

- Discuss what caused Peter, who denied Christ three times, to gladly endure suffering for proclaiming His Name.
 - ▶ [Luke 22:54-62](#)
 - ▶ [Acts 5:40-42](#)

- Many people are looking for a gospel that centers around their selfish desires. All they seek is physical health and wealth. Contrast that with Paul's view on suffering.
 - ▶ [Philippians 3:9-10](#)
 - ▶ [Colossians 1:23-24](#)

- In what way does knowing how Christ suffered for us, reassure you when you are suffering ([Heb 4:15-16](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Eternal Perspective

Consider these passages about suffering and how they remind us to keep an eternal perspective:

- [2Timothy 3:12](#)
- [John 16:17-33](#)
- [Romans 8:16-18](#)

Application Exercise: Your Life as a Cake

The events in our lives are like the raw ingredients that go into a cake. By themselves, the flour, baking soda, shortening, and vanilla are unpleasant to the taste. When skillfully mixed together and baked at the right temperature, the cake is delicious.

Make a list with two columns. In one column, put the worst things that have happened to you. In the other, put the best things that have happened to you. You may see an overlap in the lists. God may use some of the worst things to accomplish some of the best things. When we leave the earth, we will get a clearer view of how God worked in our lives for the bigger picture. We will be able to appreciate the delicious cake ([Rom 8:28](#)).

5-*Unspeakable Joy of Sacrifice*

Scripture: [Eph 5:2](#) and [1Cor 5:7](#)

Icebreaker: When Is It Easy?

Under what circumstances is sacrifice easiest or most difficult?

Discussion Questions

- God's method of delivering humans from sin is sacrificial ([Eph 5:2](#)). Make a list of practical things we can do to live our lives to reflect His example of love.
- Discuss examples of people you know who have made unusual sacrifices to follow God.
 - ▶ Walking away from a job or business ([Mark 6:3-4](#))
 - ▶ Doing things that others think are irrational ([Mark 3:21](#))
- In what way is offering ourselves as a living sacrifice our reasonable service ([Rom 11:36-12:1](#))?
- For what reason was Paul glad to sacrifice himself for the Philippians ([Php 2:12-18](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: What a Sacrifice Communicates

Consider the different types of sacrifice that the Old Testament pictures. How could they apply to you today?

<i>To Show:</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Thoughts</i>
Love and honor	Lev 7:16 Lev 3:16 Psa 116:18	Involved a costly item, was a way to say thanks, gave the best part [fat]
Importance of a request	1Sam 7:9 Psa 20:1-5	The more important, the more formal, only type of offering which burned entire animal
Covenant fellowship	Gen 26:28-30 Gen 31:44-46	Confirmed a contract agreement, shared a meal together, reaffirmed commitment to God

What could you sacrifice to show:

- Your love and honor for God?
- The importance of a request you make of God?
- A confirmation of your commitment to God?

Application Exercise: My Sacrifice

Considering the types of sacrifices indicated in the table, decide on a sacrifice you will make to God. Faithfully follow through on the sacrifice you plan to make.

6-*Unspeakable Joy of Obedience*

Scripture: [Matthew 21:1-11](#)

Icebreaker: How to Make an Entrance

If you were to make a grand entrance, what type of animal or vehicle would you use and why?

Discussion Questions: Can You Be Like the Donkey?

- Jesus chose a donkey to be part of His plan. Are you, like the donkey, allowing Him to use you as part of His plan ([Mat 21:1-5](#))?
 - ▶ What can you do to listen more carefully to how you are part of His **plan** ([John 15:16](#))?
 - ▶ What can you do to make it easier for Him to untie you ([John 8:32](#))?

- Before Jesus rode the donkey, the disciples covered it with garments ([Mat 21:6-7](#)).
 - ▶ What helps you **clothe** yourself in the fullness of Christ each day ([Gal 3:27](#))?
 - ▶ How have you noticed Him changing your stubborn, rebellious, never-ridden nature?

- To do his part, the donkey had to go where Jesus said to go ([Mat 21:7-11](#)). What can help you gladly **obey** by going where He directs you to go?

- The donkey's position of service made Jesus more visible to the crowd. What is your strategy for making Christ more visible to others through your humble **service** ([1Pet 4:10](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Joy of Obedience

Consider these passages about the joy of obedience.

<i>God's Joy</i>	<i>Our Joy</i>	
1Sam 15:22 Php 2:8-9	Psa 40:8 Jer 15:16	1John 5:3 1John 2:5

Love makes obedience a thing of joy. To do the will of one we love is never hardship. It may tax our strength, but we will consider it a privilege.

Application Exercise: The Donkey Plan

Review your answers to the “Can You Be Like the Donkey?” questions. Pick one area for improvement. Make a plan and follow through with it.

7-*Unspeakable Joy of the Cross*

Scripture: [Hebrews 12:2](#)

Icebreaker: If You Ran a Race

- If you ran a race, what type of prize would you enjoy getting as you crossed the finish line?
- When is it better to be the first one to cross the finish line and when is it better to focus on the way in which you run the race?

Discussion Questions

- What was the prize that Jesus saw before Him as He suffered for us ([Heb 12:2](#))?
- Your race as a follower of Christ includes many challenges. It helps to remember how Jesus kept His eyes on the prize ([Heb 12:1-3](#)). Consider the following:
 - ▶ You are not alone. The “cloud of witnesses” have gone before you. Who are the cloud of witnesses ([Heb 11](#))? What advantages do you have that they did not?
 - ▶ His blood grants you access to God through worship and prayer ([Heb 10:19-22](#)). How often do you use that access to God?
 - ▶ What is the prize that you see waiting for you?
- As a group, take some time to praise God and pray.
- Discuss what Christ’s resurrection offers us. Which seems most amazing to you?
 - ▶ Regeneration ([1Pet 1:3-5](#)), a new life
 - ▶ Justification ([Rom 4:25](#)), made righteous in God’s eyes
 - ▶ Other?

Dig a Little Deeper: Costs and Benefits

To run the race that He has placed before us has costs and benefits. Consider the following and add to the list.

<i>Costs</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Denying yourself (Mat 16:24)● Making material sacrifices (Mat 19:21)● Experiencing suffering (1Pet 2:20-21)● Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Honor from God (John 12:26)● New life in Him (Mat 10:39)● God living inside you (John 14:23)● Other?

Application Exercise: My Race

How are you doing with the race He has set before you? What does He want you to change in your lifestyle that can help you run a better race?



8500 West 159th Street
Overland Park, KS 66223
913.814.7223

VisitGraceChurch.com
