

JOY

Overcome Week Leader Guide

Overcome: A time for student leaders to encourage their peers to overcome their fears of sharing the Gospel.



PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select one student to lead this month's Overcome Week
- Post to social media and text friends inviting them to First Priority Club

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

Welcome Students, Prayer and Introduction

- **Overcome Week Host:** "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a place to seek and grow in God. This month we are talking about one of **Fruit of the Spirit: JOY**. We want to see from a character in the Bible how it is better to overcome hate and choose love!"
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduce Student Leading Discussion:** Today, my friend, _____, is going to share about how true joy gives us the power to overcome and persevere.

GROUP TIME: Jesus is our Joy (20 minutes)

Student Speaker: Today we're going to talk about the Apostle Paul. Before we do, what are three examples of a movie or TV show where the hero not only loses but *epically loses* a fight? It's no fun to take a beating for what you believe in. But the Apostle Paul in scripture knows firsthand what it is like to deal with epic struggles and defeats, but he didn't let that steal his joy. How can we copy him and have joy even when life beats us down?

Paul, in general, lived a life of persecution (2 Corinthians 4:8-12)

- He had some sort of difficulty in his body (2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Galatians 4:13-15)
- Paul was arrested and mistreated in Jerusalem
- He had scars on his body that came because he was beaten up because He loved Jesus (Galatians 6:7)
- Paul had a two-year imprisonment in Jerusalem.
- Paul had a dangerous journey from Caesarea to Rome that included: *Another shipwreck and a snakebite*
- Paul's first Roman imprisonment (just for sharing the Gospel) was in Caesarea.
- Paul also had a "house arrest" imprisonment in Rome.
- Paul was imprisoned other times and was eventually killed for sharing the Gospel. (see 2 Cor 11, Acts 9, 13-28).

I'm sure it could have been worse. But let's be honest: it was pretty bad for Paul. Most of our bad days are not as bad as this list. Paul even eventually was executed simply because he told others about Jesus.

But he was always filled with *joy*, no matter what he was facing.

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24)

"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
(2 Corinthians 12:10)

How did Paul do it? Did he have amnesia? Did he distract himself from sorrow with alcohol or drugs? No – it was Paul's *joy of The Lord* that kept him strong. It was his love of God. It was the truth of God's love flowing through him that kept him going – even when he didn't *feel* like it.



JOY Overcome Week Leader Guide (continued)

How do you let God's joy radiate through you? When you just bombed a test, what is your response? When someone just yelled at you, what is your response? When you feel like you're not a good Christian, what is your response? If it's anything but *cling to Jesus, trust in Jesus, or focus on Jesus*, then you might be taking the wrong approach. Remember, you cannot do this on your own strength (Phil. 4:13). You need Christ's strength to take your tough circumstances and replace them with joy.

Where does your joy come from? If it is anywhere but Christ, or His blessings to us, or our belief in Him, it *might* be that your joy is coming from the wrong place. You see, *things* can go away. We can lose our car – so if our joy comes from our car, we can lose our joy. Money can go away. Even relationships, which are a very good thing, can go away. So where does your joy come from? *Ultimately*, the biggest cause for our joy must be Christ.

APPLY IT:

Discussion Option 1: Talk about when it is easy to have joy. (Maybe it's when you're watching your favorite movie or doing your favorite hobby, or after that girl or guy you like just gave you a compliment). But why is it difficult to have joy when we are low. What does it look like to choose joy? In other words, talk about the fact that even when life is tough we are still encouraged to pursue *the joy of The Lord*.

Discussion Option 2: What are some examples of giving joy to other people? Can we be a part of bringing joy to the people of God? Can we be a part of bringing joy to the world? What are some *practical ways* that we can encourage others to have joy?

ACTION CHALLENGES:

- **Group Challenge:** Think of 5 ways to encourage others to have joy. It could be washing their car. It could be helping them with their homework. It could be writing encouraging notes. But do it; report back to the First Priority GroupMe or Social Media!
- **Invite Challenge:** Text 5 friends and invite them to First Priority and ask them if you can pray for them this week about anything.
- **Prayer Challenge:** Lastly, get into groups of three or four and spread out. Take 2 minutes to pray as a group for those you will be texting in the Invite Challenge.

WRAP UP: 2 minutes

- Share any FP Club announcements including that next week's meeting is Prepare Week.