

Romans: Living and Breathing the Gospel
Week 8: The Blessing of Reconciliation
Romans 5:1-11

1. Are you generally more of an optimist or a pessimist? Why? What is the difference between “optimism” and “hope”?
2. What is the source of hope for a follower of Jesus? When you think about the Kingdom of God, do you think more about the past, the present, or the future? Why?
3. What does it mean to be “reconciled” to God? What are the blessings of “reconciliation”? How have you experienced (or struggled to experience) these blessings?
4. Look at the process Paul outlines in verses 3-5. How are we able to actually find joy in our suffering? What role does the Holy Spirit play?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9. How does Paul apply his own message?
6. Where, other than God, are you tempted to seek joy? What do you need to remind yourself about God in order to rejoice in him instead?
7. Tim Keller says that “Joy is the marker of the justified person.” He identifies the following “signs of rejoicing” in his commentary on Romans.
 - You genuinely rejoice in the doctrine of justification by faith. You enjoy talking about it and sharing it.
 - You only think about your past sins through the lens of justification. Instead of saying “What a mess I made” you say “Despite my deep flaws, despite my record, God loves me.”
 - When you discover some new character flaw—excessive fear, pride, lack of self-control, etc.—you don’t doubt God’s love. You feel closer to him, and his grace is more precious to you. You don’t try to make excuses for your behavior by saying, “I had a bad day!” or “I was under pressure.”
 - When you face criticism, you don’t say: “This is totally unfair. You rejoice gently inside with thoughts like: “Well, I’m really a much worse sinner than they know.”
 - When you face death, you do it with serenity because you are going to a friend.

Which of these have you experienced? Take some time this week with a Christian friend and ask them to help you identify which of these signs they see in you.