



HOW CAN YOU CHOOSE
JOY EVEN WHEN
YOU'RE NOT HAPPY?

DAY 4

How do you turn the word HOW into WHO? All you have to do is change order of the letters, right?

In the same way, if you're wondering **how can you choose joy even when you're not happy**, you just need to make sure you have things in order.

Read the first sentence of this month's memory verse: *The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace, (NIV)*. The first six words explain HOW you can choose joy. Or more accurately, WHO helps you choose joy.

When you put your trust in Jesus, telling Him that you believe He is the Son of God and that He died on the cross to pay the price for your sin, you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God's power at work in you, and with that power, you can choose joy even on the worst day.

Have someone help you write the word "HOW" on your left hand, and "WHO" on the right. As you go throughout your day today, whenever anything hard happens and you're wondering HOW you can choose joy, look at your right hand and remind yourself the better question is WHO can help you. Ask God in that moment to help you power up with the Holy Spirit to choose joy.

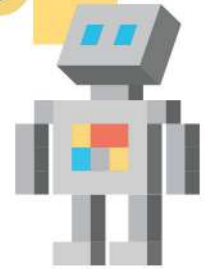


LIVE
FOR GOD



LIFE APP

WHAT GOD IS DOING IN
YOU TO CHANGE THE
WORLD AROUND YOU



DAY 1

READ ACTS 5:17-42.

You might get dizzy trying to keep up with all of the times that the disciples were punished, beaten, threatened, arrested, released, arrested again, freed by earthquakes or angels. They went through some terrible times in the months and years after Jesus went back to heaven to be with God.

But still, they chose to continue spreading the good news about Jesus. And not only that, Acts 5:41 says they actually chose joy in the midst of it all. (Go read the full verse and see why they even felt honored!)

Joy?! You might be wondering how. And if you think joy is being happy because of things going well, then this story is definitely confusing. **Joy is finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go your way.** That means you can **choose joy no matter what's going on.**

In the case of the disciples, their joy came not from what was happening to them, but from what they knew was coming. They knew that Jesus had died for them, had come back to life, and had gone to heaven to prepare a place for them, and that gave them unshakable joy. Ultimately, their joy came from choosing to put their trust in Jesus, and in what He promised.

And since they had put their trust in Jesus, they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, which meant choosing joy was truly possible despite facing some scary and hard situations. Talk about powering up!



PRETEEN

HEAR
FROM GOD

WEEK 2



GRAB YOUR BACKPACK, AND IF IT'S NOT FULL, GRAB SOME OF YOUR HEAVIEST TOYS AND BOOKS AND FILL IT UP.

Walk around your house with the backpack and think about some of the hard things you're facing this summer. Maybe you're starting a new camp, or you're nervous about a big swim meet? Or maybe your family is moving this summer, or your best friend is moving away? Whatever seems hard, it can weigh you down like that backpack.

As you think of the challenging things in your life, talk to God about them. Ask Him for help, not only facing the challenges with courage and peace, but also for help choosing joy no matter what's going on. As you pray, take the backpack off and take out the heavy objects.

Put the backpack back on and walk around. You probably feel a lot lighter now, don't you? You might even manage a skip or hop now that those problems aren't weighing you down as much.

The great thing about praying is that we can take what's hard in our lives and tell God about it. Trusting God with your problems makes choosing joy a lot easier!



Choosing joy when things are hard takes powering up with the Holy Spirit, but it also takes practice. Sometimes we get in a habit of focusing on what's hard instead of seeing the opportunity to find joy.

TONIGHT AT DINNER OR BEDTIME, PROPOSE YOUR FAMILY STARTS A NEW TRADITION OF POWS AND WOWS TO HELP YOU PRACTICE CHOOSING JOY.

First, everyone can share the hard things that happened during the day, the "pows" that caught you off guard and made you sad or frustrated. But follow it up with "wows." These could be good things that happened during the day for sure, but also think about your "pows" and how you could find a "wow" in them. How could you choose joy even when the bad things happen?

Sometimes even when you can't see the joy in a situation, the people around you can help you. Practice talking about choosing joy, and you will start seeing more "wows" throughout your day!

