



## **Lesson One: Joy in the Lord**

Read Romans 15:13. Paul's prayer is for God to fill the church in Rome (and us!) with what? What is this joy and peace based in?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2. Who are we to look to as an example on where to find our joy? What did He endure for us?

Read James 1:2-4. What are we to count as joy? Why?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. According to these verses, what are we supposed to give thanks in?

Consider what "all" means. Is there any circumstance that is excluded?

Read Genesis 37:2-4. What was the result of Jacob showing favoritism to Joseph? Was Joseph well loved by everyone?

When our actions favor one person or thing over others in an inappropriate way, often the result is that our favored person/thing will be disliked by others who are close to us. Is there someone or something in your life that you have elevated above all others? If the answer isn't "I have elevated God above all else" chances are good that someone you know has been hurt by the preferential treatment you show to this person or thing.

Hannah's feelings of worth were tied up in having a child, to the point that her husband who adored her wasn't a comfort to her. Her identity was "barren woman", and this was only compounded by the cruelty of Peninnah.

Read Galatians 2:20-21. Paul here identifies himself first and foremost as a Christ follower. His identity is hidden with Christ.

Where is your identity? In something you lack? Do you identify yourself as "alone" or "childless" or "friendless" or do you identify yourself as a "mother" a "friend"? All of those are missing the point; our first identity should be in Christ; everything else comes after that. Consider where your identity truly rests today. If it is in anything but Christ, your identity will, eventually, fail you. Ask Him to show you how to die to yourself today, so that your identity is in Him above all else.