



The "commandments" that God was giving the people were the 10 Commandments. Yes, we can easily tell stories about how we have messed up and fallen short of living out these commandments. But I wonder if we could also tell stories about how God helped us not break some of them as well.

These past few weeks, we have been working through the book The 4 Habits of Finding Joy-Filled People by Marcus Warner and Chris Coursey. In this devotional, we will work through the 3rd of 4 parts of the book, the habit of Joyful Storytelling - Habit #3.

We all have stories of reacting in some regrettable way. When it comes to storytelling, these stories can lead us to feel regret and defeat. Instead, let's focus on telling stories about the importance of returning to joy before we make life-changing decisions we would have regretted.

Let's practice telling a joy story.

A joy story explains how we faced a negative emotion in one of three ways:

1. We dealt with a hard emotion but still acted like ourselves.
2. We dealt with a hard emotion but were able to recover and return to joy.
3. We dealt with a hard emotion but learned a helpful lesson—even if we learned it the hard way.

Here are some keys to know about joy stories: Talk about small or moderate emotions. Don't start with the worst things that ever happened to you or the biggest example of an upset emotion you can remember. Describe how your body felt when you were upset and how your body felt once you recovered.

Keep the story brief. Two to three minutes is usually plenty of time. Here is the basic outline you might use. It spells STEP to help you remember the steps needed for a good joy story.

Setting: Invite people into the setting. Are you at home? School? Work? Vacation? Where are you when this is happening?

Trigger: Explain what triggered the emotion.

Emotion: Give the emotion (SADSAD: sadness, anger, disgust, shame, anxiety, despair) a name and explain it with both words and nonverbal body language.

Point: Make your point. Explain how you acted like yourself, how you recovered, or the lesson you learned.

Take some time and share your story now!



⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be in your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NIV)

NOTES: _____

QUESTIONS:

1. How might this practice of telling joy stories help you in the future?
2. What benefits come with telling joy stories?
3. What did you notice mostly about your/others' body, soul, or spirit when you told the joy story?
4. What action verb of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 would be most helpful to live into? (Impress, talk, tie, write, etc. the law and gospel of God on your heart)
5. How might you live that out this week? (memorize Scripture, confess/be forgiven with a friend, go to chapel, read the Bible first thing in the morning, etc.)
6. What is your favorite story of Jesus that brings joy to your body, mind, and soul? What about that story resonates with you?

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank You for every time You have forgiven me. You have saved me from my own thoughts that might have gone against Yours. Please lead me in a direction that follows You and Your word. Lead me through the waters to safety and to a joy-filled life built around You. Amen.

NOTES:



QUESTIONS:

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1. Share a story of a time of regret when you struggled to regulate your emotions in a healthy way under stress.

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1. We dealt with a hard emotion but still acted like ourselves.
2. We dealt with a hard emotion but were able to recover and return to joy.
3. We dealt with a hard emotion but learned a helpful lesson—even if we learned it the hard way.



