Type: Joy Through Reading

Scripture: Matthew 22:36–39; John 3:16–17; Acts 2:38 & Romans 10:9; Romans 10:14–15; 2 Timothy 3:16–17
Memorization: No

The King’s Love

Finding joy begins with knowing who we are in Jesus. When we look at our life story, we are looking at our testimony—the unique way God has worked in our life. Our experiences have likely shaped how we view faith, God, and religion. That makes our story important.

The story, *The King’s Love for His People* was created to help us better understand God’s heart for us.

The questions make the story interactive, encouraging reflection and prayer.

Using this story as preparation creates a safe space to explore faith and deepen understanding while asking honest questions. Our hope is that participants will seek truth, grow in their relationship with God, and experience True Joy through loving God first and Loving others.

THE KING’S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

There once was a King and His Son who lived in a beautiful palace. They ruled over a town filled with many people. The King cared for everyone in the town and provided all they needed. He loved them deeply and desired to spend time with each of them. The people were happy because the King generously cared for them.

The King also gave them rules and guidelines to help them live well.

The King’s rules were:

1. Love Me and put Me first in your life.
2. Listen to Me, because I know what is best for you.
3. Speak to Me with love and respect.
4. Spend one day each week learning about Me.
5. Honor and obey your mother and father.
6. Do not hurt anyone.
7. Do not use your mind or body for wrong purposes.
8. Do not take what belongs to someone else.
9. Be honest and tell the truth.
10. Do not be jealous or desire what others have.

The King kept a chart, and a red mark was given to anyone who did not follow the rules perfectly.

The people believed the rules were good and fair. But over time they realized something: they could not keep them perfectly. Some felt the heavy burden of their failures and knew they would never be good enough. In humility, they fell on their knees before the Son and asked for forgiveness.

The King and His Son welcomed them with open arms and received them as their own children. Everything changed. They now had a relationship with the King and His Son. They understood that being accepted by the King was not about being perfect. The most important thing was that the Son forgave them when they failed.

However, some people began arguing about the rules. They started believing they were better than others who struggled more. They judged them, saying, "You are nothing but a mess-up!" — even though they were failing too. Some even mocked others, saying, "The King loves us more because we are better than you."

Those who struggled the most began to feel like complete failures. They believed the King could not possibly love them because they kept messing up. Tired of seeing the red marks beside their names, they decided to leave the town and look for a place without so many rules.

One of those who left had a friend in another town. His friend told him, "Come live with us. We have no rules here." So he went to live with his friend.

QUESTION 1 OF 5

Where do you see yourself in this story?

a. Struggling to keep the rules and asking God for forgiveness
b. Thinking many people are "mess-ups"
c. Messing up often and feeling like a failure

Read: Matthew 22:36–39

His friend’s house was very noisy. There were many rooms, and the friend told him he could choose any room he wanted.

As he walked down the long hallway, he heard crying from one room and decided not to go there. From another room he heard fighting and yelling, so he stayed away from that one too.

Finally, he came to a room where he heard laughter. "This must be a good place," he thought, so he went in. Someone inside said, "This is the fun room!" and he felt sure he had made the right choice.

They even had a ball they would throw around the room. He liked that and began to join in the fun. Soon the ball came flying toward him and he caught it. When he threw it to someone else, they laughed and said, "You look funny."

Day after day, they made jokes and poked fun at other people. He tried to laugh along and keep up with them. One day, though, he noticed someone sitting in the corner crying.

"Why are you crying?" he asked. The boy answered, "They laughed at me because I couldn’t keep up with them. They called me names, made jokes about me, and hurt me." Then someone in the room said, "It’s time for you to leave. You have to go to the crying room!"

The boy who had left the King’s town thought to himself, "Oh no… maybe I chose the wrong room. Maybe I chose the wrong town." He decided to return to the King and ask if he could come back and live there again.

When he returned, he noticed a new chart on the wall. One chart had only one name on it, and it was covered with red marks. Next to it was another chart with many names, but it was completely white with no red marks at all.

The boy asked the King, "Who is the person who could not keep any of the rules?" The King replied, "That is My Son — but He kept all the rules perfectly."

The boy looked confused and asked, "Then why does He have red marks all over His chart?" The King answered, "Because I sent My Son to the people in the town, and He took the red marks of everyone who asked for forgiveness and believed in Him."

The boy said, "My King, I want to be free of all my red marks!" The King replied, "If you want to be free, you must believe that My Son died and rose again to take away those red marks." "I believe!" the boy said.

"Come," said the King. "Let me show you where My Son is now." The King brought the boy into a great palace where the Son was sitting on a royal throne. As the boy came closer, he heard beautiful voices singing together, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty — the One who always was, who is, and who is still to come."

The boy fell to his knees before the Son and said, "I could not keep all the rules. I felt like a failure, so I left. Please forgive me! Will you take my red marks and let me live in this town with you?"

The Son gently replied, "My child, trusting in Me is what it is all about. I will take all your red marks and place them on My chart, and your chart will be completely clean."

Then He said, "Come, let me show you many others who felt just like you. They were tired and carrying heavy burdens of guilt, regret, and sin. They came to Me, and I took their heavy loads and gave them rest. Now they can

see Me, learn from Me, and know that I am gentle and humble with them."

The child looked up and said, "Thank you for taking all my red marks. I understand now that You have my best interests at heart, and that You know everything. May I ask you a question?" "Of course," said the Son. "Why did You do this for me?" The Son hugged the child, smiled, and said, "Because I love you."

> QUESTION 2 OF 5
>
> **Do you believe God loves you?**
>
> Read: John 3:16–17

PART 3 OF 5

The Son brought the child to a community in town where many children lived, and each had a Helper with them. The Helper was there to teach them how to love the King and the Son, and to serve one another in love. On the wall was a sign that read these words.

> *Love God with all your heart. And love your neighbor as yourself.*

Everyone there wanted to treat others the way they themselves wanted to be cared for. And they loved the Son, the King, and the Helper with all their hearts.

The Son asked the child, "Do you know who brought you to Me?" The child replied, "Yes, Your Father."

The Son said, "He is My Father and your Father! I am Jesus, your Savior, the One who forgives all your sins. Your Helper is the Holy Spirit — your Teacher and Friend. And Our name is God, your Creator."

> QUESTION 3 OF 5
>
> **Do you accept Jesus' sacrifice as payment for your sins and want God's Holy Spirit to help you live God's way?**
>
> Read: Acts 2:38 & Romans 10:9

PART 4 OF 5

The children in that community loved one another, but most of all, they loved God with all their hearts. They loved listening to Him, spending time with Him, reading His Word, and sharing with Him what was on their hearts and minds.

Jesus said to all the children, "In this place, you will still face struggles, but remember to love others as I have loved you. You will have troubles, and people may disappoint you. But take heart — you are not a victim. You are victorious! I have overcome, and I am with you. So have peace, and be joyful, because one day you will live in the palace with Me and My Father."

Then Jesus asked, "Now, who will go to the other town and tell the one who was crying everything about Me and that I love him?"

"Here I am! Send me!" the boy replied.

Jesus said, "Yes, go. How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

> QUESTION 4 OF 5
>
> **Do you want to show God’s love to others?**
>
> Read: Romans 10:14–15

Story Explained

In the story, the rules represent the **10 Commandments**. The child receives red marks and becomes frustrated because he cannot keep all the rules. He feels judged and decides, "Keeping the rules is not for me." He leaves, finds friends who feel the same way, and joins the "laughing group." Later, he realizes he made the wrong choice and decides to return, saying, "I am sorry."

The King shows him that **not keeping the rules is sin**. Sin separates us from God, and only by receiving **Jesus' sacrifice** can our sins be completely forgiven.

The child asks the Son for forgiveness and receives the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit helps him understand God's Word, follow God, love Him with all his heart, and love others as himself. He now knows that **heaven cannot be earned**. No amount of good deeds can make up for sin.

The child learns that it was never really about the rules — it is about **loving God with all your heart** and trusting Jesus. The rules show us that we are sinners. Only Jesus could keep the rules perfectly, and He fulfilled that requirement for us. Jesus gave His perfect life so we could be free from sin and death. He took the penalty for our sins, taking off our sin-stained garments and giving us His **robe of righteousness**. When we receive Jesus as our Savior, God sees us as clothed in that pure white robe.

Through Jesus, we can be united with God and enjoy a relationship with Him now and for all eternity. The child now understands that God is loving, forgiving, gentle, and kind. God's Holy Spirit helps him to make the right choices. He can ask God for wisdom, and God will help him without holding his faults against him.

> *If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*
>
> *James 1:5*

> QUESTION 5 OF 5
>
> ### Do you own a Bible?
>
> a. Yes
> b. No, but I would like one.
>
> Read: 2 Timothy 3:16–17

God’s Word Breaks it Down

> *“So the trouble is not with the law (rules), for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.”*
>
> *Romans 7:14*

> *“So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirements of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.”*
>
> *Romans 8:3–5*

> *“For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*
>
> *Galatians 5:13–14*

A CLOSING WORD

The Joy of the Lord

Jesus teaches that joy begins when we understand how deeply God loves us. Before we can live with joy, we must first receive this truth: God loves you deeply. His love is not earned — it is given.

> *“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.”*
>
> *John 15:9*