

Defiant Joy

What happens when you're full of it...

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Chewbacca Mom and Author of *Laugh It Up!*

Defiant
Joy

ALSO BY CANDACE PAYNE

Laugh It Up! (book, ebook, and audio book)



What Happens When You're Full of It

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

BY CANDACE PAYNE

WITH KEVIN AND SHERRY HARNEY

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Defiant Joy Study Guide

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Session One

LAUGH IT UP, LIVE IT OUT



WHEN GOD SHOWS UP AND THINGS BLOW UP . . . IN A GOOD WAY!

My life changed when I put on a Chewbacca mask, cracked up at myself, and over 160 million people laughed along with me. I still have not figured out exactly what was going on that day in my van. I don't fully understand what happened the next few days when I was invited to appear on TV shows and interviewed by people I had only seen on a screen up to that point in my life. But here are a few things I am learning through this experience.

We were made for laughter, joy, and fun . . . more than we realize. Our hearts and souls long for joy. I believe there is a God who delights when we laugh and celebrates when we play.

God has a destiny for each of us. It is better than we dream. And He will move us toward our destiny in surprising and shocking ways. God might not use a *Star Wars* mask and the internet to unfold your destiny, but He has a plan and it is going to be a fun ride, if you are willing to jump on.

To be totally honest, I'm still figuring out what all of this means for me. God is still unfolding His plan and I am having a great time figuring out where this is all going. I am excited to have you join me on this journey of life, laughter, joy, and discovery.

THINK ABOUT IT, TALK ABOUT IT

Tell about a time God pulled back the curtain and gave you an exciting and unexpected glimpse of His plan and destiny for your life. What did you see and how did you feel?

How have you experienced joy and excitement in surprising ways as you walk through life?

JOY beckons us to a place of carefree laughter,
smiles, and peace in the simplest moments.

WATCH THE SESSION ONE VIDEO

Feel free to reflect, jot down your thoughts, listen, laugh, and even ask questions!

One Big Thought . . . Joy is a daily decision.

The God who made you wants you to experience delight, drink in joy, and actually have fun. He really does. This means we are partners with God in experiencing and living with joy. So, how do we engage with joy? Here are some ways we can partner with God in our journey to invite joy into our lives:

Do all things without complaining.

Change your attitude.

Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

Focus less on ourselves and more on others.

JOY skips when others sulk; she takes risks when others cower; she works overtime looking for ways to pierce the darkness with effervescent hope.

BE HONEST

Take time to talk about any of the questions, statements, and Bible passages below, choosing what works best for your group. Have fun and be honest.

1. When you think of “Defiant Joy,” what pictures, images, people, or life experiences come to your mind?

Tell a story of someone you have met who is a living example of Defiant Joy.

2. Sometimes Joy feels so far away that when she knocks on the door, we are reluctant to turn the knob and invite her in. What are some of the reasons Joy can feel like a stranger?

Why do some people push Joy away rather than embrace her?

3. The Bible tells us that God's desire is for us to have life and have it *to the full* (John 10:10). What pictures come to your mind when you think of your life being lived to the fullness of what God wants?
4. What are some practical ways we can resist and overcome the temptation to be negative, grumble, and complain? How can we invite Joy into times when there is a temptation to be negative?

- ♦ Whatever is _____
- ♦ Whatever is _____
- ♦ Whatever is _____
- ♦ Whatever is _____

What are real-life, practical ways we can think about keeping these things in the center of our mind?

8. How did Jesus live as our perfect example of *not* focusing on self but sacrificially serving other people? (Try to come up with some examples from His life and ministry as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and even Philippians 2.)
9. Tell a story about someone you know who lives a life of consistent service and care for other people. How does their lifestyle of service unleash joy?
10. What is a way you can serve someone in need as a group or as an individual? How could this become a lifestyle and not just a one-time action?

SAY yes to Joy. Jump in. She is waving at you to join the fun.

PRAY

Spend time as a group or on your own talking with God about any of the following topics:

- ♦ Thank God for the people in your life who have been an example of self-sacrifice and humble service to others.
- ♦ List ways to show gratitude to Jesus for His powerful and eternity-changing sacrifices for you.
- ♦ Pray that you will notice when God is revealing your destiny, and ask for courage to follow His leading.

SIMPLE joys can carry us in a significant way.

JOY LAB

Session One

Between now and your next meeting, use any of these ideas to launch you into a life of joy, encounter with God, laughter, deep faith, and celebration.

A JOY-FILLED DAY

Try a twenty-four-hour experiment. You might even want to set a countdown timer or an alarm on your smartphone. Try to speak words of joy and encouragement all day. Commit to build people up and lift their spirits.

Do all you can to *never* open your mouth and complain, criticize, grumble, or speak a negative word. Just try it.

Pray for power and insight as you walk through this “Joy-Filled Day.” Use the space provided below and on the next page to write down some notes and gather your thoughts so you can share them with your group the next time you meet:

What part of this twenty-four-hour experiment was easy for me? What wasn’t as easy?

How did I feel as I came to the end of this day?

How was my day different, in a good way, because I tried to live out this challenging biblical idea?

How did this challenge to increase positive talk and refrain from negative talk bring joy to my day as well as to the day of others?

POST THE POSITIVE

Using either a separate piece of paper or the box on the next page, make a list of positive things you see or experience, things that God has done and others have done. Use the eight suggestions in Philippians 4:8 to get you thinking. Be sure to list at least ten positive things. You might want to put Philippians 4:8 as a header over your list.

MY LIST OF POSITIVE THINGS

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Post this list where you will see it every day. It could be a screen saver on your computer, or a note on your refrigerator, bathroom mirror, above your bed, you name it. Why not post it in all these places? Each time you look at it, let your thoughts shift to positive, God-honoring things.

If you want to get really bold, post this list of positive and joy-filled things on social media where others will read it and be inspired. Use the hashtag: #MyWhateverIs to see what others are posting as well as to find your own inspiration.

SEE AND SERVE

Put some effort into being tuned in to the needs all around you. When you see a need, take action and fill it. It could be something that takes fifteen seconds, fifteen minutes, or half a day. It could be as simple as giving someone a bottle of water, a few dollars, or slowing down to speak a kind word. It might be taking a morning to join a service team from your church or helping with a community service project. Listen for the nudges and whispers of the Holy Spirit of God and respond!

Make a list of what you were led to do, who you did it for, and the impact of this action. Keep a record of at least three service actions that you took part in:

What I did: _____

How did it make me feel?

How did it impact someone in a positive way?

Joy that came from this:

How I could do this again or expand on this:

What I did: _____

How did it make me feel?

How did it impact someone in a positive way?

Joy that came from this:

How I could do this again or expand on this:

What I did: _____

How did it make me feel?

How did it impact someone in a positive way?

Joy that came from this:

How I could do this again or expand on this:

PLAY is not something that happens to you.
It's something you choose and pursue.
Look for opportunities to play.

GO PLAY

Get out and play this week and then answer the following questions:

I played today and it felt _____.

I think I felt that way because:

I want to feel more of that because:

I'm going to make that happen by:

If you had playtime with a friend, how did it feel to laugh, delight, and enjoy this time together?

JOY is fully present and content where she is: to play in the sand, breathe in the ocean air, and count the colors that cascade over the horizon while hiding that secret moment in her heart.

FOR OVERACHIEVERS AND HOMEWORK LOVERS

The Bible teaches a lot about joy. If you want to explore some of the Bible's teachings on joy and other topics from this session, consider reading the following chapters in the coming week.

- ♦ Day 1: Philippians 1
- ♦ Day 2: Philippians 2
- ♦ Day 3: Philippians 3
- ♦ Day 4: Philippians 4
- ♦ Day 5: James 1

Note: If you want to read more about having a positive attitude, check out the prologue and chapter 1 in *Laugh It Up!*

Laugh It Up!

Embrace Freedom and Experience
Defiant Joy

*Candace Payne, Viral Sensation,
Chewbacca Mom*

The world knows Candace Payne as “Chewbacca Mom,” the wife and mother of two from Dallas who captured the hearts of nearly 200 million people around the world with nothing but a toy Chewbacca mask, a smart phone, and infectious laughter.

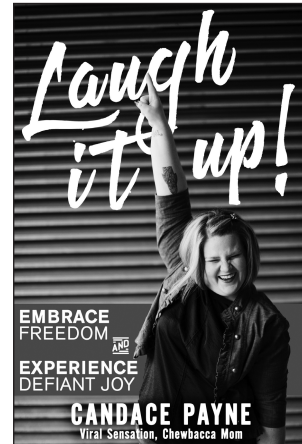
Candace’s viral moment of simple joy became Facebook Live’s top video. But what the video doesn’t show is Candace’s storied journey of daunting obstacles on the way to the joy-filled life—extreme poverty, past trauma, and struggles with self-worth.

Laugh It Up! tells the rest of the story behind the woman in the mask. Like most of us, Candace has often felt overlooked, undervalued, and insignificant. But she has also discovered the secrets to unshakable joy that no circumstance can take away, and *Laugh It Up!* will help you discover and experience the same.

Join Candace to discover the gift God has given us all to experience life to the fullest. All you need to do is answer when Joy, whom Candace personifies as a friend, calls you to come and play.

- Do you feel tempted to give up on your dreams? Joy stays the course.
- Do your knees knock when thinking about the future? Joy hopes for what can be.
- Do you feel unseen and unnoticed? Joy is content whether backstage or center stage.
- Do you feel crushed under the weight of regret? Joy loves you enough to weep with you, but also enough to help you move on.

When life punches you in the gut, it can be difficult to muster a smile—much less a laugh. But with humor and power, wit and wisdom, Candace lights the way forward to a life that is free indeed.



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