



Q & A



Longing for Joy

An Invitation into the Goodness and Beauty of Life

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Can we still have joy in a world where hopelessness and despair are the norm? Offering theologically grounded and research-based practices, Alastair Sterne explores pathways to joy and shows us how to gradually cultivate the deep, abiding joy that we were created for and that enriches the world around us.

Taking Joy Back from “Joy-Mania” Authors

Describe the experiences that led you to write *Longing for Joy*.

Alastair Sterne: *Longing for Joy* was born from two experiences. First, I confronted my joylessness. The cultivation of joy became the focus of my learning, research, and practice over the past decade which culminated in a doctorate. At this point of my journey, I want to share what I have discovered and the joy I now embody with a wider audience. Basically, I want to help people open up to the possibility of joy.

Second, when I released my first book *Rhythms for Life*, many of my non-Christian friends and acquaintances read it. But I didn't write *Rhythms for Life* with this audience in mind. Most notably, my physiotherapist engaged with *Rhythms for Life*. Her perspective on the book made me wish I had written something else that could winsomely introduce her to the goodness of God in the good news of Jesus Christ. The result of these two experiences inspired my vision for *Longing for Joy*.

What is the message you hope to convey to readers?

Alastair: The central thesis of my book posits that the presence of God embodies boundless joy, and that his companionship assures us of the inherent possibility of experiencing profound joy in our lives. Throughout the book, I try to humanize joy and spiritualize joy. On the one hand, I try to take joy back from the “joy-mania” authors who think we can be joyful nonstop and from others who over-spiritualize joy (i.e. pitting joy in Christ against “common” joys). On the other hand, I try to spiritualize joy because joy does not just originate in our hearts but in the divine life of God. While I offer practical steps toward joy, I regularly emphasize that I'm talking about opening ourselves up to the possibility of joy and not life-hacks to become more joyful.

How do you hope readers are impacted by *Longing for Joy*?

Alastair:

- I want readers to see that the story of God (and its climax in the gospel) is the story of joy.
- I want readers to see the breadth of possibilities for the presence of joy in their lives.
- I want readers to become intentional in their pursuit to cultivate their receptivity to joy.
- I want readers to have experienced small moments of joy as they read the book.
- I want readers to experience the outward momentum of joy—flowing from God to us and toward others.



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