**Philippians, Joy No Matter What**

**Purpose:** Strengthen believers by showing them that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone; it is not dependent on circumstances.

#### **Historical:** The background of the first church is found in Acts 16: 13-40. Two WOMEN AND A WARDEN—Lydia, the slave girl, singing in prison, and the warden and his family were saved.

The Philippians sent Paul a generous gift when He was imprisoned in Rome. He wanted to thank and encourage them and tell them why they could be joyful despite difficult circumstances, including his current imprisonment.

**Key Message:** Paul's Joy letter contrasts the world's view of joy with God's perspective. Joy is an acronym for how we prioritize life—joy: Jesus, Others, You. Paul wrote this joy letter from prison—demonstrating that outward circumstances don't need to dictate our inner attitudes. This letter frees us to have Joy in suffering, serving, believing, and giving.

**Life Verses:** Another tool to study the Bible. We need to know God's promises to claim them. "Work the Word for the Word to Work."

**Chapter One—Joy in Suffering**

1. Friendship and Partnership in Faith are Important.

Paul thanks the Philippians for their support and reminds them that they are spreading the Gospel with their support. *"Though one can be overpowered, two can defend themselves, and a cord of three is not easily broken."* (Eph 4: 11-12)

1. *"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Phil 1:6). Do you sometimes feel as though you aren't making enough progress in your spiritual life? God is a finisher. He will help you every step of the way. Don't let your present, imperfect condition rob you of the joy of knowing Christ or keep you from growing closer to Him.

#### Paul sees the good in his bad situation—how what happened advanced the Gospel. Paul could see his life from God's perspective.

1. **Suffering leads us to greater intimacy with Christ.** Paul says we participate in Christ's suffering (3:10). **There is something that happens in suffering that leads to a deeper intimacy with Christ.** *"In much the same way, the Christian must understand that we can rejoice in suffering because "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."* ([Rom. 5:3-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%205.3-5)).

**Chapter 2—Joy in Serving**

1. A Call to Unity. Phil 2: 1-4. Share what Christ has given you.

"*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love being one in spirit and of mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."*

1. A call to Humility "*Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage."* (Phil 2:6)
2. *"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." (2:12-14)* We find the secret to a changed life when we submit to His control and let Him work in and through us.

Practical ways we work out our salvation: "*Do everything without grumbling or arguing. . . then you will shine like stars in the sky." (2:14-15)* Don't let dissensions snuff out your light. *"Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when He heard them His anger was aroused."* (Numbers 11:1) Complain and Remain. Praise and be Raised!

**Chapter 3—Joy in Believing**

Rejoicing in the Lord is a safeguard.

No confidence in the flesh.

Warning against false teachers (those that put legalism back into religion). Denise spoke about this in Galatians last week—it is an important theme of the OT.

*Let go of the Past. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (3:12-14)*

Be Eternity-Minded. ***“****To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery: Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* Colossians 1:27

**Chapter 4, Joy in Giving**

Stand Firm.

Unity is a big message in the New Testament.

Ultimate joy comes from Christ dwelling within us.

How strange that a man in prison tells a church to rejoice. Paull's attitude teaches us an important lesson: Our outward circumstances do not need to dictate our inner attitudes.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Be Gentle.

Do not worry.

Pray about everything.

Think about the Right Things.

Life Verse: "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)* God's peace is different from the world's peace. True peace is not found in positive thinking, in the absence of conflict, or good feelings. It comes from trusting God to work everything out best for you as you fulfill your role in God's work in the world.

**Think the Right Things.** What we put into our minds determines what comes out in our words, desires, and actions. "*Finally, 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."* (Phil 4:8)

**Contentment—drawing on Christ's strength.**

*"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." (3:11)*

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (3:13)*

The key to finding happiness in these moments of trial and sorrow is reflecting on the everlasting treasure of the Lord Jesus Christ, being content with him and the gift of salvation we possess through him, and finding eternal satisfaction in knowing him and making him known to others.

**End with an Exhortation to Put Our Faith Into Practice**

Let's put Paul's exhortation into practice from Philippians 4:9—"*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice. And the peace of God will be with you."*

Let's commit to prioritizing our personal spiritual growth and stepping out for Christ with others, even if it's a little uncomfortable.

**Questions**

1. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:9 to put into practice what we have learned from him. What will you put into practice? Let's be intentional, ladies, and develop some Spiritual Goals.
2. Have you experienced a time of suffering that became your testimony or a closer relationship with God?
3. How can we guard against complaining and grumbling?
4. How did Paul maintain such a grateful, content heart in prison? And how can we follow his example?
5. How do you pursue Joy? Phil 4:4—*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*