

Living with Joy

JOY APPEARS · PHILIPPIANS 1:3-8; 1:12-18; 2:19-30; 2:1-4; 4:4, 10-13 · JANUARY 2, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4

What is Joy?

A definition of joy

The difference between happiness and joy

Living with Joy in Prayer (Philippians 1:3-8)

Cultivating joy through prayer

Cultivating joy through gratitude for others

Living with Joy Because of the Gospel (Philippians 1:12-18; 2:19-30)

Experiencing joy in the Gospel we have received

Experiencing joy as the Gospel is proclaimed (even through wrong motives)

Experiencing the joy of the Gospel in us and through others

Living with Joy in Relation to Others (Philippians 2:1-4)

Cultivating joy in the imperfect Christian community

Cultivating joy as God makes us more like Jesus

Living with Joy Beyond Circumstances (Philippians 4:4, 10-13)

Choosing joy

Choosing joy amidst trials

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you found it easy to be joyful? When have you found it difficult to be joyful? What was the difference?:
2. This week we continue our series, "Joy Appears", by exploring the life of joy in Christ as described by Paul in the book of Philippians. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through the Scripture. Then, whether you're on your own or with others, read the entire book of Philippians aloud (it takes around 15 minutes).
3. *Background:* Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul with Timothy (1:1) to a church in Macedonia during his imprisonment in Rome, somewhere around 60-62. The

letter was delivered by Epaphroditus (2:25), a member of the Philippian church, after his recovery from an illness.

4. Philippians 1:3-8 is one long sentence in which Paul expresses his grateful joy toward God for the Philippians. Why is Paul grateful and rejoicing over this local church?
5. According to 1:12-18, what are Paul's personal circumstances? What is happening to his captors and through others because of Paul's circumstances?
6. What stands out to you about the Paul's attitude during his difficulties?
7. What does Paul say will make his joy complete in 2:1-5?
8. Grumbling and complaining seem mundane, but in 2:14-18 Paul says our everyday attitudes and words are a form of proclaiming the good news in Jesus. How might grumbling not only rob our joy but also hinder our witness?
9. How quick are you to turn toward complaining in your life? What is one way you could turn from complaining toward something more constructive this week?
10. Chapter 4 of Philippians contains two groups of imperative statements (4:4-7 and 4:8-9). What is Paul calling the believers to do in verses 4-7?
11. In 4:10-20, Paul gives thanks for the Philippians kind provision for him delivered by Epaphroditus (see 2:25-29). What characterizes Paul's attitude toward his circumstances and the Philippians' provision? How has God helped him in this?
12. In what ways do you need to develop contentment even as you look for God's abundant provision in your life?
13. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study? If you're on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize a verse from Philippians that stood out to you from this study. Write it on a notecard or make it your smartphone or computer background so you see it regularly.
- Set aside some time in prayer this week where you will specifically express gratitude to God. You may want to write things down as you pray so you remember what you're thankful for afterwards.
- Express your appreciation or gratitude verbally or in written form to someone this week, whether a family member, a friend, a roommate, a classmate, or a work colleague.