

Book of the Week: Small Group Guide

Week 7: Philippians

July 19, 2026

Icebreaker Question: What's the difference between happiness and joy in your own words? Can you think of a time when you experienced joy despite difficult circumstances?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Joy vs. Happiness:** Happiness is circumstantial; joy is rooted in Jesus regardless of circumstances
 2. **Paul's Context:** Written from house arrest, chained to a guard, yet mentions joy/rejoice 16+ times
 3. **Purpose in Christ:** "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)
 4. **The Christ Hymn:** Jesus humbled himself, and we find joy in what He has done for us
 5. **Pressing Forward:** Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead
 6. **Peace in Uncertainty:** "Do not be anxious about anything" (Philippians 4:6)
 7. **Encouragement:** The church thrives when we encourage one another
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Joy

1. The Popov Family Testimony

- How did the Ukrainian refugee family's perspective on joy challenge or inspire you?
- What does it mean that "our reality is not of this world" when it comes to experiencing joy?

2. Paul's Situation

- Paul was under house arrest, chained to a guard, yet wrote about joy repeatedly. What does this teach us about the source of true joy?
- Have you ever experienced joy in an unlikely or difficult situation? Share your story.

Section 2: Finding Purpose

3. Purpose in Christ

- Paul said he considered everything "garbage" compared to knowing Christ. What things do we tend to value that might distract us from this purpose?

- The sermon mentioned there's "no retirement" from following Jesus. How does this perspective change the way we think about different seasons of life?

4. Pressing Forward

- Read Philippians 3:13-14. What does it mean practically to "forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead"?
- What past hurts, failures, or even successes might be keeping you from pressing forward in your faith?

Section 3: Peace and Contentment

5. Anxiety and Peace

- Read Philippians 4:6-7. What specific anxieties or worries do you need to bring to God in prayer?
- How have you experienced "the peace of God which transcends all understanding"?

6. Contentment

- Paul learned to be content in every situation (Philippians 4:11-13). What's the difference between contentment and complacency?
- In what areas of life do you struggle most with contentment?

Section 4: Community and Encouragement

7. Encouragement

- Read Philippians 2:1-4. How does the church community help us maintain joy?
- Who in your life needs encouragement right now? How can you provide it this week?

Closing Prayer

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God for the joy that comes from knowing Jesus
- Pray for contentment regardless of circumstances
- Ask for strength to press forward in faith
- Pray for opportunities to encourage others this week
- Lift up specific needs shared during discussion