

“A Model for Joy”

Philippians 1:3-11

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

1. Paul was _____ for what God had done _____ the church at **Philippi**. (Philippians 1:3-5)
2. Paul was _____ that God would _____ the work He’d begun in the _____. (Philippians 1:6)
3. Paul was prayerfully _____ that they would grow to be more _____, and to bring _____. (Romans 8:29, Philippians 1:9-11)
 - In _____ of love.
 - with _____ and _____.
 - resulting in _____ and _____.
 - For _____.

Points to Ponder and Apply

1. Joy comes when we get our focus off of _____, and onto the _____ of God and His _____ in those around us.
2. Gratitude is most meaningful when it’s _____.
3. Remember that God is always _____, whether you can see Him or not.
4. Invest yourself in _____ that _____.
5. Growing knowledge should lead to greater _____, _____, and _____.

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Paul’s Path to Joy

1. Paul was **grateful** for what God had done **in and through** the church at Philippi.
(Philippians 1:3-5)
2. Paul was **confident** that God would **continue** the work He’d begun in the **Philippians**.
(Philippians 1:6)
3. Paul was prayerfully **hopeful** that they would grow to be more **like Jesus**, and to bring **glory to God**. (Romans 8:29, Philippians 1:9-11)
 - In **demonstrations** of love.
 - with **knowledge** and **discernment**.
 - resulting in **purity** and **fruitfulness**.
 - For **God’s glory**.

Points to Ponder and Apply

1. Joy comes when we get our focus off of **ourselves**, and onto the **goodness** of God and His **work** in those around us.
2. Gratitude is most meaningful when it’s **expressed**.
3. Remember that God is always **at work**, whether you can see Him or not.
4. Invest yourself in **relationships** that **matter**.
5. Growing knowledge should lead to greater **wisdom**, **purity**, and **love**.

Questions for Life Group Discussion

1. When you think about the word “joy,” what comes to mind?
 - How would you describe the difference between biblical joy and simply being happy?
2. What circumstances tend to have the greatest influence on your emotional outlook?
 - Why do you think our circumstances can so easily determine how we feel?
 - What are the consequences in your life when you allow your circumstances to dictate your feelings?
3. Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians, yet he described praying for the Philippians “with joy.” What do you find most striking about that contrast?
 - What’s something in your life that might make it challenging for you to operate with joy?
4. Think about someone God has used significantly in your life. What did God accomplish through that person that causes you to be grateful for them today?
 - Can you think of anyone that you might contact this week to express your gratitude for how God has used them in your life?
5. Paul looked at the Philippians not simply for who they were at that moment, but with confidence in what God was continuing to do in them. Why can it be difficult for us to see God’s ongoing work in ourselves or in other people?
 - How can we use Philippians 1:6 to change our perspective when that’s what’s needed?
6. What difference does it make in the way we face a difficult circumstance when we deliberately shift our focus from what is happening around us onto the goodness of God and what God may be doing through it?
 - Can you think of a time that you were able to do that, and share how your changed perspective made a difference?
7. Paul prayed that the Philippians would grow in love, knowledge, discernment, purity, and the fruit of righteousness. If you could identify one area of spiritual growth that God may be wanting to develop in your life right now, what would it be—and why?
 - What can you do about that?