

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 12: Be Full of Joy Always

Bible Text
Philippians 4:1-9

Memory Verse

“Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!” (Philippians 4:4)

Word List

book of life: the record of those who are right with God and will have life that lasts forever

One of my favorite stores sells many kinds of ice cream. Sometimes it is hard to choose just one. The person at the store will hand you small spoons, each with a different kind of ice cream to try. What fun.

Philippians is called the “Book of Joy.” Chapter 4 is full of many ways to have joy. It is as if Paul is giving us spoons filled with teachings. We learn how to have the peace with Christ that brings true joy.

Stay True (Philippians 4:1)

1 So, my dear Christian brothers, you are my joy and prize. I want to see you. Keep on staying true to the Lord, my dear friends.

Paul loved the believers in Philippi. They were his joy. He called them both family and friends. He begged them to stay true to Jesus and not give up. He told many ways to do this in the verses in this lesson.

Agree with One Another (Philippians 4:2-3)

2 I ask Euodias and Syntyche to agree as Christians should.

3 My true helper, I ask you to help these women who have worked with me so much in preaching the Good News to others. Clement helped also. There are others who worked with me. Their names are in the book of life.

Two believers had worked to preach the Good News. They were now having a problem with each other. Paul reminded them that they should agree with one another. They should have one mind. He had asked someone to help them. Paul is grateful for those who worked with him in this church. All of God’s children are written in the **book of life**.

When we do not agree we take time away from telling others about the Good News of Jesus. Telling others is the best way to spend our time.

Be Full of Joy (Philippians 4:4)

4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again I say, be full of joy.

Paul tells us the reason we can be full of joy. It is because we belong to God. Paul tells us to be full of joy two times because once is not enough. This is a command, not just good advice. Joy comes from loving God and loving others.

Lessons for Joy (Philippians 4:5-7)

5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.

6 Do not worry. Learn to pray about everything. Give thanks to God as you ask Him for what you need.

7 The peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Christians should treat all people with patience, with understanding, and with love. If we must disagree, we should do it in a kind and gentle way.

It would be easier for us if the word “all” was not in verse 5. But we cannot choose to treat some well and others not. I once learned a poem that says, “To love the whole world for me is no chore. The problem for me is the person next door.” We are to be nice to everyone.

Paul reminds the Philippians that the Lord is coming soon. We need to live every day ready for Jesus to come again.

Next we are told not to worry. Worry is when we imagine the future in a terrible way. Sometimes we cannot keep worries from coming to our minds. Yet Paul tells us not to worry about anything. It should not be a part of our lives.

Have you ever ridden in a car that seems to be going too fast? You are not the driver. But your foot still goes down on the floor as if it would help make the car stop. It does no good. Worry does no good either.

Worry means that we are putting something else in the place of God. We must learn to trust that God is in control and will help us stand firm. Worry is the opposite of peace. Worry says that you do not trust God to take care of you. Satan wants us to worry.

Paul tells us what to do instead of worry. He said to pray about everything. This is a command: Pray, and know God’s peace! When we pray, we talk to God. We give thanks, and we ask God for what we need.

Prayer brings God’s peace to our hearts. God’s peace will be like a soldier who guards our hearts. The peace that God gives will protect our thoughts and desires. God’s peace is greater than our minds can understand.

Think and Do What Is Right

(Philippians 4:8-9)

8 Christian brothers, keep your minds thinking about whatever is true, whatever is respected, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever can be loved, and whatever is well thought of. If there is anything good and worth giving thanks for, think about these things.

9 Keep on doing all the things you learned and received and heard from me. Do the things you saw me do. Then the God Who gives peace will be with you.

What would happen if all your thoughts could be seen in a sign over your head? I am happy they are not. But God knows our thoughts. Paul says our thoughts can change our actions. We must train our minds to think

Things to Think About

1. What things about living with others give joy? What things make it hard?
2. What are the most important things about faith that keep us together? How do we keep from letting what is not important divide us?
3. Name some times when it is difficult for you to have joy. How do you rejoice in the Lord even in hard times?
4. When we pray we ask God for what we need and we also give Him thanks. Why are both necessary to find the peace of God?
5. Which of the parts of our thought life seem most important to you in verse 8? What do you do to replace bad thoughts with healthy ones?

thoughts that are true and right.

It is said that the average person has over 10,000 separate thoughts each day. That could be 3.5 million thoughts a year. If you live to be 75, you could have over 26 million different thoughts.

The believers in Philippi were told to learn to pray and think the right things. Paul's body was in prison, but his mind was not. Paul gave a list of things to think about. Some people think only of bad things. Sin always begins in the mind.

Paul writes that we should think about what is true, respected, and right. Think about what is true, not false. Think about what is pure, not impure. Think about what we should love, not what is unlovely. Think about what is good, not what is wrong. Think about that which is worth giving thanks for, not that which is shameful. If we do this, it will change us.

We are to do the things learned from Paul. He told the believers to do whatever they heard from him or saw him do. Few would be bold enough to say others should be like them.

Paul's life was the Bible that the new believers knew, saw, and heard. Paul said that they should do these things. They needed to put them into practice. They could put them into practice by following Paul's teaching and his example.

Hopefully, many will want to know God because of what they see or “read” in us. Paul knew that the only way to have the peace of God was to know the God of peace.

A friend in our International Bible study always ends her letters with: “Thank you and God be with you.” This is what Paul said. The God Who gives peace is with you. That is the way to pure joy.

Things to Remember

Paul loved his brothers and sisters in Christ. He wanted them to stay true to the Lord and get along with one another.

Two times Paul reminds us to be full of joy. He could say this because even though he was in prison, he was full of joy. We can be full of joy because we belong to Jesus and have life that lasts forever.

We should learn to be gentle and not worry about anything. We can pray about everything. This takes the worry away and gives us God’s peace.

When Jesus Christ is in your heart, you will love the good and hate the bad. You will love the truth and hate the falsehood. You will love the lovely and hate the ugly. You will love the pure and hate the dirty. Jesus changes your life from the inside out.

We need to follow the right leader. Paul teaches us what we should do. Remember, God will be with you!

Philippians 4:1-9

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- 4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again I say, be full of joy.**
- 5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.**
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- 7 The peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**
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