



Joy for Life Philippians 4

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BIG IDEA:

We find ourselves this week in the final chapter of the Apostle Paul's "discourse on joy" to his congregation at Philippi. He understood that "anxiousness" is the result of the pull in our lives between hope and fear. It was Paul's desire to equip his spiritual children with the truth that could make it possible for them to live in a place of peace and great joy for the rest of their lives, no matter what circumstances would come their way. He knew that their lives and ours, would be filled with opportunities to live in anxiety, but that they, and we, must make the "joy decision" every day in order to experience "joy for life."

"Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life." - Philippians 4:6-7 MSG

IDENTIFY JOY KILLERS:

- Our "Worry." What are your current worries?
- Our "Why?" What unanswered life-question steals your joy?
- Our "Who." Who are your joy killers?

KEYS TO JOY:

- Make the joy decision every day. Philippians 4:10-12
- 1. Pray about everything. (Philippians 4:6-7) Not being prayerful and thankful leads to a lot of anxiety. How is your prayer life?
- 2. Think about the right things. (Philippians 4:8-9) Not having the right mindset leads to a lot of anxiety. How's your thought life?
- 3. Trust God in all things. (Philippians 4:12-13) (Romans 8:31) Not trusting God leads to a lot of anxiety. How is your faith life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If prayer is addressing something to God (telling Him what is going on) and God already knows everything that takes place in our lives, what is the value of telling Him about it? What happens when we talk with Him about the circumstances of our lives? What changes?
- Anxiety can be the result of living with "rivers" of negativity and "drops" of God. How is it that we can so easily find ourselves living in that state of imbalance? How can we "tilt" the scales to get more of Him in our lives?
- Paul indicated that learning (making it a habit; deciding) to be content was a key to experiencing joy for life. Contentment is easy when things are going well. What might be the "secrets" of being content when things go wrong?

APPLICATION:

- Anxiety marks the spot where we are mistrusting God (not experiencing the benefits of complete trust in Him). Define the things that bring you the greatest anxiety and ask for God's help in learning to fully trust Him in them.
- Practice thanking God in advance for those things for which you are trusting Him.
- Pastor Ta gave us three practical principles from Philippians 4 about how we can respond to the anxiety the world is experiencing. Can you name each principle?

PRAYER FOCUS:

Philippians 4:8-9 indicates that thinking on right things will result in "the God of peace" being present with you. Pray that your group will "decide" to think on those things that bring His peace and presence in their lives.