



# Joy No Matter What *Philippians I*

Pastor Jon Las

**MAKE IT MORE MEANINGFUL.** Look for ways to bring transparency to the group, sharing personal examples about learning joy in difficult circumstances. Ask someone from the group in advance to share their own story about joy in trials.

## READ PHILIPPIANS I

### BIG IDEA:

Happiness and joy are believed by most to be synonymous, but we learned that they are really not. The book of Philippians was penned by a man who was, at the moment of its writing, suffering untold troubles and trials. Paul was confined in a Roman dungeon, beaten regularly, and chained to one of his guards, awaiting death for the unthinkable crime of receiving the good news of salvation through Christ, and the desire that all might know his amazing savior. As he spent time in prison for preaching the Gospel, he chose to find purpose and meaning for the circumstances he was experiencing, demonstrated incredible faithfulness, and did so with an attitude of unshakable joy!

### STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe Paul's perspective? What emotions does he express towards The church in Philippi?
2. Paul says the Philippians are his partners in the gospel. What might he mean?
3. What does Paul mean when he says God will complete the good work he began in them?
4. Paul insists his "feelings" toward the Philippians are right or appropriate. Why does he have to clarify this? Why might someone consider his perspective inappropriate? (i.e. how would you feel if you were in Paul's situation?)
5. What was Paul's primary fuel and ultimate joy in verses 21-22?
6. Paul repeats a few ideas throughout this section: advancing the Gospel, suffering for Christ, rejoicing in all circumstances. Which of these impacts you the most today, and how?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If "happiness" is about what happens to you, and "joy" is about what happens in you, explain why joy is a choice. How do we "learn" joy in the midst of the things that are happening to us?
2. Why do you think God used the story of Paul, who was in prison, and whose trials were anything but "light and momentary suffering" to teach us about joy? What must change in our perspectives in order for us to see our own trials in that same light?
3. Pastor Jon said, "Do not allow what you can't control control you." How is this possible?
4. Circumstance can be defined as the circle in which we decide to stand. How do you choose where to stand? What can you do to help assure that you stand on the right ground in which growth and joy can take place in your life?
5. Are you leveraging your situation with God purpose for you? A) How can you be like Paul in winning people for Christ where you are currently at? B) Why do you think is it important for a follower of Jesus to bring others to Him?

### NEXT STEPS

Ask two people who know you best, and whom you trust, to help you assess whether your life is being controlled by what happens to you, or by what is happening in you. Listen to their observations, and with their help, develop a plan to better align your life with the higher principles that produce a life characterized by joy.

### PRAYER FOCUS

Have your group pair-up to pray, men with men, and women with women, that God will give you the ability to focus on the "What?"...what He is doing in you, what He is desiring to teach you, etc., and to stop allowing yourself to be stalled in the "Why?"...Why me Lord?, Why did you let this happen to me?. etc.

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**Announcements :** **BAPTISM BASH** March 8 (Encourage attendees who haven't been baptized to sign up!)

**CITY FOOD DRIVE** March 9-14 (Anyone who has income, purchase \$25 worth of non-perishables for the Salvation Army).