



Joy's Focus Philippians 3

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BIG IDEA:

We may find it easy to acknowledge that happiness is fleeting, but it can be just as easy to feel that joy can quickly be stolen from us. How are we to protect the treasure of joy when it can seem to be more difficult to obtain, but gets taken before it seems that we can even fully embrace it? Joy is a benefit that comes from the Lord – it cannot be generated from any earthly circumstance. The key to embracing and guarding joy is to recognize the essential mindset within which joy must exist. If the Lord is eternal, and joy is only available in him, then joy can only flourish in those who are eternally minded.

“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.”
- Philippians 3:1

IDENTIFY JOY KILLERS:

- Unaware of the benefits of the cross.
- Addicted to pleasure.
- Earthly minded.

KEYS TO JOY:

1. See God's redemption for my yesterday. (Philippians 3:7-11) What did Paul consider “rubbish”? What achievements do you have that seem to pale in comparison to knowing Jesus?
2. See God's purpose for my today. (Philippians 3:12-14) What did Paul discover about his “today”? What is God's purpose for you presently?
3. See God's plan for my tomorrow. (Philippians 3:20-21) What was Paul's goal? What should be your ultimate goal as a Child of God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Paul, understanding the huge role that our minds play in our experience of joy, constantly reminds us in Philippians to safeguard our faith by “renewing our minds” to God's truth.
 - What things in your life compete for your attention and focus, and ultimately kill your joy?
 - What are some steps we can take to renew our minds?
- “The only way to get rid of the pain of the past is to give it purpose.”
 - What kind of things from your past are causing you pain?
 - How could God be trying to “redeem” those things to reveal his purpose in them?
 - How could your story be used to make a difference in the lives of others?
- Abigail Lasala stated that, “There is no joy when we are unaware of what Christ has done for us.” Discontent in life can be a result of not knowing what God has done for us. Some trials can be a gift from God to make us aware that we have not discovered our purpose.
 - In what ways have you found that to be true?
 - What role do “decision” and “direction” have in the discovery of that purpose?

APPLICATION:

Take time make a list of all the benefits of the cross that you are aware of. Then look for others in scripture that you may not have been aware of. Start with Psalm 103:1-5. Determine which of those benefits you are already experiencing and enjoying. Develop a plan to keep yourself more aware of those benefits and to practice living in them.