

Living Joyfully

A study in Philippians

“Rejoice in the Lord always...”
Philippians 4:4

PERD

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How to Use This Study Guide

Each week, as you sit down to study, begin with prayer. Before reading the lesson and answering the questions, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to you. You may find it helpful to have a few study aids such as a dictionary, a concordance, and more than one translation of the Bible. You may also find the following online resources helpful: BibleGateway.com BlueLetterBible.org

Note: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was used for this Study Guide with consideration of the New King James Version (NKJV) and the Amplified Bible.

At the end of each week's study questions, there is a "Lift Your Heart" section. This will be an important and personal part of your study. You are encouraged to write in your journal what transpires as you listen and respond to the whispers from God's heart to yours. When you look back through your journal at the end of the study, you will be blessed and amazed at your insight and growth.

The Bible is an endless mine of priceless treasure. The "Growing Stronger" section is designed to help you dig more treasures from God's Word that will strengthen your relationship and walk with Him. May what you find there dazzle you!

Philippians 1:1-11... *Giving Thanks and Encouragement*

Paul began many of his letters with thanksgiving. This letter is no exception and includes a prayer of deep warmth and affection. His words bring loving encouragement. As you read the first chapter, try to imagine yourself sitting with the church in Philippi listening as the letter is opened and read for the first time. Lydia, a cloth merchant, is there along with a slave-girl and a jailer... (Acts 16)

Read Philippians Chapter One

Re-read verses 1-8

1. Note how Paul and Timothy are described in verse 1. Look up servant and joy in a dictionary; write the definitions here:

How could Paul be joyful as a servant?

2. Use verses 3-8 to describe Paul's feelings toward the Philippians.
3. From Paul's attitude, what do you learn about healthy Christian relationships?
4. What does verse 6 reveal about the character of God?

How does this encourage you?

5. How do you see God's continuing work in your life?

"Each of you is a unique child of God. God knows you individually. He sends messages of encouragement, correction, and direction fitted to you and your needs. ~ Henry B. Eyring

Read verses 9-11

6. What are Paul's specific prayer requests?

7. Why is each of these critical for a joyful Christian life?

8. What does it mean to you to be "filled with the fruit of righteousness"?

9. Compare verse 11 with Galatians 5:22-23. What is the purpose of these fruits?

Lift Your Heart...

How do you normally think of others? Are you positive? Judgmental? Gracious? Critical? Write a few names of the people in your life in your journal and prayerfully consider your attitude toward them. Next to their name, write what you can do through your words, prayers, and actions to encourage them this week.

Growing Stronger...

Everyone needs encouragement. There are so many things that can discourage you: illness, difficult relationships, and besetting sin to name a few. You can be certain that if you get discouraged, others do too. In the following verses, find specific ways that you can be encouraged and encourage others.

Psalm 27:14

Isaiah 58:11

Romans 8:31-32

1 Corinthians 15:57

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Galatians 6:2

Hebrews 3:13

Hebrews 10:23-25

Philippians 1:12-30... *Rejoice Always*

It is easier to say, "Rejoice in the Lord" than to do it! When we receive a blessing or things are going well it is easy to be joyful; when hard times come our attitude is often very different. The apostle Paul faced many trials yet always rejoiced. Some insights into how he accomplished this are found in these verses.

Read Philippians Chapter One

Re-read verses 12-19

1. How does Paul feel about his imprisonment?

Why do you think he feels this way?

"Joy mitigates circumstances." ~ Sue Stein

2. What are the motivations of the two groups Paul is describing?
3. Have you ever questioned the motives or methods of other Christians?

From these verses, what do you learn about the motives or methods of others?

4. What do you think motivated Paul?

Read verses 20-26

5. As Paul weighs the following options, what are the pros and cons?

If he lives:

If he dies:

6. What do you learn from verse 21 about living intentionally for God?

Read verses 27-30

7. What does it mean to you to live in a manner "worthy of the Gospel"? Be specific.

8. Write verse 29 in your own words.

9. What is the most difficult situation you are facing right now?

How can you glorify Jesus in this situation?

Lift Your Heart...

The joy of a Christian is a powerful witness for the Lord Jesus. In your journal, write about a difficult circumstance you have faced. What was your response? Did you complain and allow bitterness to creep in or did you trust the Lord to see you through and use it for His glory? How did your attitude affect those around you? Ask the Lord to produce more joy-fruit in your life.

Growing Stronger...

The Bible is the greatest how-to book ever written. Philippians is Paul's how-to letter for a life filled with joy. The words "rejoice" and "joy" appear frequently throughout this letter. Yet Paul didn't pen these words from the comfort of his warm, well-lit study but from a prison cell. Regardless of circumstances, a life lived for the glory of God will overflow with joy.

Read Acts 16:6-40

How did God guide Paul to Philippi? (verses 6-12)

What does this teach you about the ways God may use to speak to you?

The result of Paul and Silas' obedience was torture and imprisonment. What was their response in verse 25?

How does this encourage you as you encounter difficulties?

Philippians 2:1-4... *Jesus - Others - You... JOY*

Looking after our own interests comes naturally. Though selfish ambitions may bring us temporary happiness and success, there can be no genuine joy in our lives when we put *self* above *others*. Paul encouraged the believers in Philippi to find joy not only in their circumstances, but also in their humility and love toward others.

Read Philippians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 1-2

1. What are some of the benefits of your relationship with Jesus?
2. Choose one benefit and describe how it affects your life personally.
3. What are some attitudes Paul encourages you to cultivate in your relationships with other believers? (See verse 2)
4. How can these attitudes foster joy in the church?
5. When do you find it difficult to have these attitudes?

Read verses 3-4

6. List the directives Paul gives in verses 3-4.

7. Which of these is most difficult for you to put into practice? Explain your answer.

8. Why is humility essential in your relationships with others?

How is pride a hindrance?

"Pride is the mother hen under which all other sins are hatched."

~ C. S. Lewis

9. How has someone looked out for your interests?

Lift Your Heart...

Paul instructs us to look out for the interests of others. One way you can do this is to pay attention to the people you interact with and discover more about them. This week in your journal, write a prayer thanking God for the people He has placed in your life. Ask Him to show you a few people you can encourage and how best to do that.

Growing Stronger...

Selfish ambition and vain conceit have no place in the life of a Christian. These characteristics arise from pride, rather than from humility and love. What do you learn from the following verses about how you are to treat others?

John 13:34-35

Romans 12:10

Romans 15:1-2

Galatians 5:13

1 Peter 5:5

Philippians 2:5-18... *The Humility of Jesus*

In the first four verses of Philippians 2, Paul gave pitfalls to avoid, such as selfish ambition and pride. Now he brings to remembrance the supreme example of selfless humility, love, and service... Jesus Christ.

Read Philippians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 5-8

1. Though He is God, what did Jesus do when He became a man?

How can you follow His example? Be specific.

2. What do the following verses say about Jesus?

Mark 10:45

John 5:30

2 Corinthians 8:9

Read verses 9-11

3. How did the Father honor Jesus' humility?
4. Read Mark 10:29-31. What did Jesus promise His followers?

Read Philippians 2:12-13

5. Read 2 Peter 1:5-8. How do these verses relate to "working out your salvation"?
6. How is God at work in you to do this?

Read Philippians 2:14-18

7. According to Philippians 2:14-16, how are you to do the work God has for you?

What will be the outcome?

8. What do you think Paul means by "I am being poured out as a drink offering"? See Numbers 15:4-5, 28:7.

Why would this cause him to rejoice?

*"Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature;
the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of
meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us.*

~ Andrew Murray

Lift Your Heart...

Sometimes life is just hard. Getting through a day without grumbling or arguing can be almost impossible. Yet this is how we are to bring glory to our Father and shine as His lights in this dark world. In your journal, recall some recent times in which you struggled to be that light. Could you have done better? Worse? Write a prayer thanking God for always being with you to help you through any situation.

Growing Stronger...

Look up the following verses and note what they teach about humility.

Deuteronomy 8:2

2 Chronicles 7:14

Proverbs 11:2

Mark 9:35

Colossians 3:12-13

James 4:6

Philippians 2:19-30... *Humble Servants*

The lives of other believers can inspire us. In these verses, Timothy and Epaphroditus are examples to challenge us to walk humbly, love selflessly, and serve sacrificially.

Read Philippians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 19-24

1. Why does Paul hope to send Timothy to Philippi?
2. How does Timothy's character reflect the attitudes Paul has been urging earlier in this chapter?
3. What do you think it means to look out for the interests of Christ Jesus?
4. What do the following verses say about the gospel, the good news?

Mark 16:15-16

Romans 1:16-17

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

2 Timothy 1:8-11

5. What are some ways you serve or can serve to further the gospel?

"What an encouragement to realize that God has reserved you and me for a special task in His great work. In His hands we're not only useful, but priceless."

~ Joni Eareckson Tada

Read Philippians 2:25-30

6. How does Paul describe Epaphroditus? (verse 25)

7. Why does Paul want to send him back to Philippi?

8. How are the believers in Philippi to receive him?

9. Think of someone you know or have read about who has suffered for the sake of the gospel. How can their life be an inspiration for you?

Lift Your Heart...

Many people have been long or short term missionaries, worked with disaster relief, or served in a local outreach or ministry. Seek out someone who has done this and ask them about their experiences; maybe share some experiences of your own. Write in your journal what you have learned and write a prayer thanking God for the humble servants He uses to further His gospel.

Growing Stronger...

Some people seem to be very comfortable in sharing the gospel with others, though for many it can be quite intimidating. The "Romans Road to Salvation" is a selection of verses taken from the book of Romans that present the plan of salvation through faith in Jesus. You can memorize them and/or mark them in your Bible to use when sharing your faith. Look up the following verses and write the truths you find as they lead down the road to salvation.

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

Romans 10:9

Romans 10:13

Romans 5:1

Romans 8:38-39

Philippians 3:1-11... *All For Christ*

Paul was resolved to live for Jesus Christ, at any cost. In these verses, Paul recounts reasons he might have confidence in the flesh. However, Paul rejoices not in who he was by birth, but in what God had done for him through rebirth.

Read Philippians Chapter Three

Re-read verses 1-3

1. Why do you think rejoicing in the Lord is important?

2. What is Paul's warning in verse 2?

3. What are three characteristics of true "circumcision"? (verse 3)
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

Read verses 4-6

4. What are some advantages Paul could have boasted about before his conversion?

5. How do you think legalism gets in the way of knowing Christ and rejoicing in Him?

6. What "laws" and "works" please God as found in the following verses?

Matthew 22:36-40

Luke 9:23

Romans 13:8-10

7. Which of these is the most difficult for you? Explain your answer.

Read Philippians 3:7-11

8. What did you "lose" when you became a Christian?

What did you "gain"?

*"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."
~ Isaac Watts*

9. Using verses 9-11, complete the following:

that I may "be _____"

"that I may _____ and the _____ of His _____"

and the _____ of His _____"

that "I may attain to the _____ from the _____."

Lift Your Heart...

The heart-cry of Paul was to know Jesus intimately. Would you like to know Jesus better? Taking a "spiritual inventory" may help. Are you dying to self? Do you have unconfessed sin? Are you truly seeking God through prayer and His word? Prayerfully consider the health of your relationship with God and write your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

Read the following verses and look for Paul's reasons for joy.

Philippians 1:4

Philippians 1:18

Philippians 2:2

Philippians 3:1

Philippians 4:1

Philippians 4:10

What additional reasons can you find to rejoice?

Philippians 3:12-21... *Pressing Toward the Goal*

Paul uses the analogy of an athlete preparing for a race as he describes his single-minded focus on the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. In this study, Paul challenges us to a higher level of devotion to attain our spiritual goals.

Read Philippians Chapter Three

Re-read verses 12-14

1. Paul compares his quest for heaven to a race. What are the similarities?
2. How does looking back hinder you from running the race?
3. What do the following verses say about our past sins:

Psalm 103:12

Micah 7:19

Hebrews 10:17

4. From Philippians 3, describe the reason for each action in the verses below:

Action	Reason
"press on" (vs. 12)	
"forgetting what lies behind" (vs. 13)	
"press toward" (vs. 14)	

"We are able to persevere only because God works within us, within our free wills. And because God is at work in us, we are certain to persevere." ~ R.C. Sproul

Read verses 15-16

5. How does God reveal things to you?

6. What "standard" or "rule" is Paul referring to?

Read verses 17-21

7. What examples has Paul given us to follow in this passage?

8. Who are we warned about in verse 18?

What four traits of these enemies are listed in verse 19?

- a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.
9. In what ways are true believers different from this group?

Lift Your Heart...

In following Paul's example, we should actively forget what lies behind us and press forward. Where are you putting your forward focus? What things are hindering you? Contemplate Hebrews 12:1-2; write your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for Him to return as our Savior." Philippians 3:20, NLT

We live on earth, but as Christians we are citizens of heaven; one place is temporary and one is eternal. What a beautiful future we have ahead of us! Read and summarize the following verses. Then rejoice in the promise of heaven!

Revelation 7:16-17

Revelation 14:2

Revelation 15:3,4

Revelation 21:4

Revelation 21:23

Revelation 22:3-5

Philippians 4:1-9... *Don't Worry, Pray!*

Much of life is lived in the midst of struggle and chaos, not sitting peacefully by a quiet mountain stream. Instead of being filled with anxiety and worry, Paul encourages us to "rejoice in the Lord" and pray, no matter where we are.

Read Philippians Chapter Four

Re-read verses 1-3

1. What specific situation in the church at Philippi did Paul address?

How do you think this situation could have affected the church?

Read verses 4-5

2. Compare verse 4 with James 1:2-4. When and why are you to rejoice?
3. How can showing gentleness to others bring joy to you? (Philippians 4:4-5)
4. Describe how knowing "the Lord is near" encourages your heart?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

5. What is God's antidote for anxiety?

What is the result?

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

~ Corrie Ten Boom

6. Why is it so important to guard your heart **and** your mind?

Read verses 8-9

7. What does Paul instruct you to think on?

How does this alleviate your anxieties and worries?

8. Summarize the following verses; choose one to memorize.

Psalm 26:2-3

Isaiah 26:3

1 Peter 5:7

9. Paul's own life and teaching are an example of how we are to live. What will be the result of such a life?

Lift Your Heart...

Our lives can become consumed with worry, yet God's Word tells us not to be anxious. Worry and anxiety reveal a lack of faith in the love and character of God. Reading God's Word and hiding His promises in your heart can help you stand firm in the midst of struggles and chaos. In your journal, thank God for His Word, which reveals His heart to you, and record some of the beautiful promises He has given you.

Growing Stronger...

Like oil and water, joy and anxiety do not mix. Worry and anxiety come from focusing on your circumstances, rather than focusing on the Lord. Read Matthew 6:25-34. In your own words, summarize what Jesus teaches us about worry.

How can this help you when you are tempted to worry instead of praying?

Philippians 4:10-23... *Being Content*

Though Paul was greatly encouraged by the help and love he received from the believers in Philippi, his true contentment was found in Jesus Christ. Being content does not come naturally. However, Paul shows us that it can be learned.

Read Philippians Chapter Four

Re-read verses 10-13

1. In what kinds of circumstances had Paul learned to be content?
2. How do you think discontentment can affect your relationships with others?
3. How does thankfulness foster contentment?
4. In whom do you find your strength?
5. Read the following verses; summarize what you learn about God and His strength.
John 15:5

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Ephesians 3:16-17

Colossians 1:11

Read Philippians 4:14-20

6. There are times in life when you are the giver; other times you are the receiver. List some things you have learned personally:

as the giver	as the receiver

7. How does Paul describe the gift Epaphroditus brought?

8. God used their gift to help and encourage Paul. What does Paul say God will do for them?

9. What is the difference between a **need** and a **want**?

10. How do you think learning to be content will enable you to see some of your **needs** as **wants**?

*"You say, 'If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied.'
You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have,
you would not be satisfied if it were doubled."
~ Charles Spurgeon*

Lift Your Heart...

The grass can seem greener on the other side of the fence. This is especially true in our modern world where we are bombarded with ads which are specifically designed to make us discontent. Real contentment is found in Christ alone. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be content with who you are in Him, His sanctifying work in your life, and how you are to serve Him. In your journal, write Jesus a love letter thanking Him for all you can do in His strength.

Growing Stronger...

In verse 20, Paul declared "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." No matter how your needs are met, it is God who deserves and should receive the glory for meeting those needs. Look up "glory" in your concordance. Record a few verses below that speak to you; briefly describe their significance.

How do you personally give God glory?

My Reasons for Living Joyfully

