

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- Share a moment from your past when you experienced unexpected joy.
- How are you defining joy because of that moment?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What stands out to you from today's message about Biblical joy being different from worldly happiness? Does this change your perspective on joy?
- Paul found joy in remembering the Philippians despite his difficult experiences there. How have you seen God bring joy through challenging circumstances in your own life?
- What are some "lesser joys" that you find yourself tempted to pursue instead of finding satisfaction in Christ?
- What difference would it make in our witness to others if Christians were known more for their authentic joy than for what they stand against?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Share one way you've experienced God's joy recently.
- Share one area where you're struggling to find joy.
- Take time each day this coming week to thank God for specific evidences of His grace in your life.
- Identify one "lesser joy" you are pursuing and intentionally seek satisfaction in Christ instead.

GROUP FOCUS:

- Praise God and thank Him for being a God of joy who delights in blessing His children.
- Request help from God and one another to live as a joyful witness to God's grace this week.



WEEK 4 A NEW WAY OF LIFE PART 3: WHAT KIND OF JOY (PHILIPPIANS 1:3-5)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 1:18	Romans 1:25	Matthew 11:18-19
Philippians 1:1-5	Colossians 3:5	Galatians 5:13
Psalms 68:3	Hebrews 12:2	1 Peter 2:1
Nehemiah 8:10	John 17:13	Proverbs 30:12
Psalms 16:11	Ephesians 5:1	1 Corinthians 10:31
Philippians 4:4	1 Corinthians 11:1	Titus 1:15

FEBRUARY 2, 2025

WEEK 4
A NEW WAY OF LIFE PART 3:
WHAT KIND OF JOY

Today we will explore the theme of true Christian joy as revealed in Philippians. Paul demonstrates that authentic joy isn't dependent on circumstances but flows from our relationship with Christ. Paul wrote to the Philippians with joy despite having experienced persecution and imprisonment in their city. Paul's joy comes from understanding God's grace and our position in Christ, not from our performance or circumstances. Joylessness in Christians has often damaged the perception of Christianity; we are called to display Christ's joy as we partner together in the Gospel.

What Kind of Joy? John Piper gives this definition: *"Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world."*

In Galatians 5 Paul says that joy is a fruit that God's Spirit brings into our lives, He does that by opening us to see the beauty of God's love and our own salvation. **Joy is delight in God for the intrinsic value of who He is.** We are called to display and show the joy of Jesus so everyone would know that our God brings joy.

1. God is joyous and happy – Joy starts with God Himself. Nehemiah 8:10 "...the joy of the Lord is your strength." Joy comes from God and is to make God's people strong.

2. God made His people to enjoy Him and the life He gives them. Pleasure comes from the right hand of God. Where is Jesus seated? The right hand of God! Joy only works well when it is God centered. Joy is a command. Frances de Sales says, *"The evil one is pleased with sadness and melancholy because he himself is sad and melancholy, and will be so for all eternity. Hence, he desires that everyone should be like himself."*

3. Our sin is what causes us to trade joy for lesser things.

Because of our condition of sin we have a tendency to exchange God for any numbers of things. We settle for less than who God is, but it is God Himself who has purposed to save us; it pleases God to save us. Jesus comes, He died, He Rose, He gave us the gift of life...our righteousness comes from God.

4. We can have a life marked by freedom and joy because Jesus gives it to us.

Jesus dies for us in our place - the people He created He allowed to kill Him. How could God do that? **For the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2)!** Is the joy of Christ enough to endure our trials or hardships? There is no perfect life apart from Jesus. Freedom is not being our own god; freedom is found in waking with God. The goal of the Christian life is to enjoy God—not to not sin. **Joy is not abuse or abstention.** People who enjoy God are strong and satisfied in Him.

5. True joy points to God's glory and His Kingdom

The law can't change the heart, we know this by how many people fall into the sin they are condemning. *Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. All things are pure!*

A joyless Christian life has done much harm to the perception of the Bible, of Christianity, and of the church. Imagine if the world looked and saw a joyful people who loved one another, laughed readily, and trusted Jesus even in the midst of hardship.