

Rejoice. Always!

BY SHARI MILLER

In this study, we look at Philippians 4:4-9 where we read in verse 4, *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.* We will explore the joy we all have in the Lord and how that joy affects our daily lives, our lives as we relate to one another, and our lives as we live in the world, but are not of the world.



Faith Talk: Discuss the similarities with and the differences between happiness and joy.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, You are the real source of our joy! We rejoice and thank You for giving Your Son Jesus to live a perfect life, suffer, die for our sins, and rise to life again. We rejoice in the gift of Your Spirit and the faith to believe in Jesus. We rejoice in the gifts of the Spirit, which allow us to rejoice in the Lord — even in our mundane and “so daily” lives. Bless our study of Your Word. In the name of Jesus we joyfully pray. Amen.

Rejoice.

Philippians is the letter Paul wrote to the Christians in the Roman colony of Philippi. In Acts 16:6-40, Paul is visiting Philippi and helping to establish the church there. Paul uses the words “rejoice” and “joy” in his epistle at least 16 times, and Philippians is often referred to as the “Epistle of Joy.” Read **Philippians 4:4-9**. Mark the passage as it will be referred to several times within the study. The first section of verse 4 reminds us to ... *rejoice in the Lord* (emphasis added). In verses 5-7, how does Paul specifically see rejoicing in the Lord being lived out in the daily life of a Christian? _____

Read **1 Samuel 1:25-28; 2:1-2**. What was Hannah’s situation? _____

Would you have rejoiced? Why or why not? _____

Identify the reason for joy in the following Bible passages:

Nehemiah 12:27, 43 _____

Psalms 5:11 _____

Joel 2:21 _____

Habakkuk 3:17-18 _____

Zechariah 9:9 _____

Philippians 1:18 _____

1 Peter 1:8-9 _____

Faith Talk: Read **Philippians 4:11-13**. Would Paul say that our circumstances dictate our joy? Why or why not? _____

Always!

We might be tempted to question Paul’s use of the word “always.” We might even reason, “Sure, Paul, you can say that, but you have to know that there are times and trials in my life when I don’t feel like rejoicing.” Read **Philippians 1:12-14, 29-30**. What is Paul experiencing as he writes this epistle? _____

In Philippians 1:21, Paul declares: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. What relationship is most important for the Christian’s joy — even when enduring hardship and trial? _____

How does the Spirit nourish our relationship with Christ and keep us in the faith? _____

Paul continues with practical advice to live a joyful life. Read **Philippians 4:8-9**. See also **Philippians 1:27-28** and **2:14-18**. What does he advise? _____

In **Philippians 3:14-17**, what does Paul additionally encourage? _____

Faith Talk: Reread **Philippians 3:17**. Who would you identify in your life as an example of faith to follow and imitate? What have you learned from him or her? _____

In Philippians 3:14, we read: *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*. As we live our daily lives, how can we be joyful regardless of our circumstances? _____

Faith Talk: Why is it important to know that our joy is not dependent on our feelings or circumstances? Discuss with a partner or the small group. _____

Faith Talk: Toward the end of the book of Zephaniah, God promises, through His prophet, in 3:17 that Israel will be restored and forgiven: *The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing*. Discuss what it means that God saves, rejoices over His children, and exults over us with loud singing. How does that make you feel? _____

Why do the words *he will quiet you by his love* remind you of **Philippians 4:7**? _____

Faith Walk:

1. Thank God for sending His Son to be your Savior from sin, death, and the devil, and, for giving you the faith through His Spirit to believe in this Good News.
2. Pray that the Spirit gives you an opportunity to share the Good News about Jesus in your daily circumstances with someone who needs to hear.
3. Ask God to give you His peace — even in the midst of uncertainty or trial.
4. Thank God for a special mentor in the faith that you have had.
5. Sing a joyful song to the Lord at the top of your voice. Rejoice in the Lord — always!

Closing: Pray, sing, or listen to “Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng” (LSB #813; LW #455) or “Joy to the World” (LSB #387; LW #53; TLH #87).

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