

# THE JOY SERIES

Joy

What does joy look like?

Philippians 4:4–9

Father, we thank you for the examples of joy that you provide us, both in Scripture and in life.

Give us wisdom to look for joy in the right places and the right people.

May your Holy Spirit give us the ability to become and be an example of joy for others to imitate.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

Philippians 4:4–9

**4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. **9** What you have learned and

received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

### Find examples of joy to imitate

- "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me" (v. 9a).
- Where are you looking for joy?
  - Be careful who you allow to influence you.
    - "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us" (Philippians 3:17)
    - "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us" (2 Thessalonians 3:7a).
    - "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).
    - "Paul understands his life to be worthy of imitation not because of rhetorical achievement or popularity but because his life reflects the love, humility, and other-regard witnessed in the cross of Christ" (Joshua W. Jipp, *Pauline Theology as a Way of Life*, 212).
  - We learn best by imitating an example.
    - "Imitation is the starting point for virtuous behavior in that the moral learner copies or reproduces the types of behavior that the moral *exemplar* performs. Secondly, the moral learner begins to simulate the reasons, motives, and feelings of the moral *exemplar* until those states become their own and the moral learner acts based on their own internalized characteristics" (James A. Van Slyke, "Moral Psychology, Neuroscience, and Virtue," 460).
- What does joy look like?

### Be an example of joy to imitate

- "practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (v. 9b).
- How are you practicing joy?
  - Paul was an example of joy
    - "3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy" (Philippians 1:3-4).
    - "18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance" (Philippians 1:18-19).
    - "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again" (Philippians 1:25-26).
    - "17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me" (Philippians 2:17-18).
    - "10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and

hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:10-13).

- Practice Joy
  - Celebrate the Lord’s goodness
  - Pray about everything
  - Express gratitude for the gifts
  - Contemplate the good
- “We may suspect that there is something more than mere imitation going on here. One recent writer speaks of ‘cascading grace:’ when God does something in one person’s life and through his or her work, other people see it and think, ‘Do you suppose that could happen here?’ and sparks turn into a flame” (N. T. Wright, *After You Believe*, 269-270).
- God’s grace can work through your example.
- What does joy look like?

Find examples of joy to imitate and be an example of joy to imitate