

THE JOY SERIES

The Joy Series

How do you practice joy?

Philippians 4:4–9

We all want joy! But sometimes, for whatever reason, joy can be hard to come by. Whether you find yourself regularly inclined to anxiety, sadness, or depression or you're in a dark season currently, joy can feel elusive. It's even more difficult when the Bible talks so much about joy. How can Christians lack joy?! We're supposed to be the most joyful people on planet earth! The reality is life can be hard and joy can be hard to find. But joy is real. So, what is joy? How do we practice it? What does it look like? What's the point of joy?

After defining joy last week, this week we get to application. It's safe to say, most of us want joy, especially as defined biblically and theologically last week. So, how do we practice this joy that the Lord graciously gifts us?

- As you reflect on the message, what stood out to you? What is something you are still thinking about?
- What is something from the message that challenged you? How are you wrestling with that challenge?
- What question(s) do you have from the message?
- What is at least one practical takeaway from the message?

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.

- Think back to last week. If joy is a gift, why does it still require practice?
- Paul gives us the first practice in verse 4—celebrate the Lord’s goodness. He says, “rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Why do you think Paul tells us twice to rejoice? What does it say about who we are?
- How has the Lord been good to you? How can you celebrate that goodness? Be specific!
- Second, Paul tells us to pray about everything—“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” How is prayer the answer to every anxiety?
- What is keeping you from joy? Give it to God right now in prayer!
- Laced with prayer is thankfulness—express gratitude for the gifts. What keeps us from gratitude?
- What do you have to be grateful for? What is one way you can be more grateful and thankful this week?
- Finally, Paul tells us to contemplate the good. He writes, “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.” What does it mean to contemplate something?
- What are examples of true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence, and praise-worthy things we should contemplate?
- How can you build contemplation on the good into your daily life?

- Pastor Dustin began his sermon with a simple prayer. Close your time together praying this prayer of joy together out loud.

Father, we thank you that you give us the power and means to grow in joy.

Thank you for the gifts of celebration, prayer, gratitude, and contemplation.

Give us the courage and endurance to not only start practicing joy but persevere in practicing joy.

May your Holy Spirit work in, through, and with our practices to not only produce joy within us but transform us into people of joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.