

THE JOY SERIES

The Joy Series
What's the point of joy?
Philippians 4:4–9

Father, we thank you that even in the midst of suffering and sorrow, we can still experience joy and be joyful.

We acknowledge that our current joy is imperfect and incomplete.

May your Holy Spirit empower us to look to Jesus for perfect joy.

May your Holy Spirit enable us to live for the joy of the eternal.

We pray this now knowing and believing that our imperfect and incomplete joy will become perfect and complete.

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.

The Joy of Jesus should be our joy

- “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” (Hebrews 12:1–3).
- Our joy is imperfect
 - The enemies of joy are the Devil, the flesh, & the world.
 - “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Ephesians 2:1–3).
- Our joy can be perfect
 - “3 So he told them this parable: 4 ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:3–7).
 - “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matthew 13:44).
 - Just because there is suffering and sorrow doesn’t mean there can’t be joy
 - We receive joy from Jesus’ suffering and sorrow.
 - “He drew near to us in the incarnation so that his joy and ours could rise and fall together—his in giving mercy, ours in receiving it” (Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, 37).
 - Our joy is perfected through suffering and sorrow.
 - “Joy does not look away from suffering. It faces it head-on, without flinching, and then looks through it. Suffering is not entirely opaque; it is partly transparent. Joy looks through the lens of suffering to see what God is seeking to do, and exults in this” (Rick Howe, *Path of Life*, 179).
 - “7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;

perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:7–10).

- Look to Jesus for joy

The joy of now is a foretaste of the joy eternal

- Our joy is incomplete
 - "16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16–17).
- Our joy will be complete
 - "10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:10–14).
 - "Joy is not so much a spontaneous emotion as a response formed in those who can read the economy of God's activity in particular ways and are able to act in conformity with that unfolding story. Joy is the appropriate response when one rightly perceives the unfolding of God's drama of salvation even in the midst of suffering and opposition" (Stephen Fowl, *Philippians*, 181).
- Live for the joy of the eternal.

"Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 136-137).

Our imperfect and incomplete joy will become perfect and complete.

- Look to Jesus for joy
- Live for the joy of the eternal.