



REAL JOY

A STUDY
THROUGH
PHILIPPIANS

WEEK 3
JANUARY 26

LIFE
GROUPS

GUIDE

JOY

*I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me
has really served to advance the gospel,*

Philippians 1:12

GETTING STARTED

Have you ever been confined to one place for more than 3 days? What were the worst and best parts of the situation?

STORY BACKGROUND

Apostle Paul authored the book of Philippians during his imprisonment in Rome, probably around 62 AD. He was writing to a predominantly Gentile church that was about 12 years old. Philippi was a Roman colony with deep Greek roots. As a Roman colony, the citizens of Philippi had all of the rights, privileges, and obligations of Roman citizenship. It was named for Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. In Acts 16 we can read the story of how Paul, along with Silas, was called to preach in Macedonia during his second missionary journey. There by a riverside a woman named Lydia “*opened her heart to respond*” (Acts 16:14 NIV), and she, along with her entire household, were baptized. During this same visit, Paul and Silas were beaten, imprisoned, and miraculously released while singing praises to God. The astonished jailer fell before them asking, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” (Acts 16:30). Another household heard the message of salvation and was baptized.

The morning following their miraculous release, the town magistrates tried to send them away quietly, but Paul stood upon his rights as a Roman citizen. Being publicly exonerated made it possible for Paul to return later, and also may have secured some protection for the fledgling church.

With this in the background of Paul’s letter to the Philippian church, we can see how they would be sympathetic to his situation. Even though he is once again in prison, the theme of his letter is “rejoicing!” in all situations. With his previous experience of being in the Philippian jail he is able to declare, with great confidence “*I want you to know, brethren that my current circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel*” (Philippians 1:12 NASB). Amen to that! If Paul had not been imprisoned we would not be reading and learning through this letter!

IN THE STRUGGLE



STORY: Philippians 1:12-18 (Read aloud)

MEMORY VERSE: Philippians 2:1-2

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.



HEAD LEVEL: These questions help us to examine what the Word tells us.

- What were some of the ways the gospel advanced while Paul was imprisoned?
- What did Paul want the Philippian church to know about his situation?
- What do you see in this passage that are real reasons for Paul to be struggling?



HEART LEVEL: These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- What might we learn from this passage about how to deal with critics?
- What factors may cause people to lose their joy in ministry?
- Is Paul teaching that we are we expected to feel joyful in every situation?



HANDS LEVEL: These questions help us commit to a next step and live it out in our everyday lives.

- What is a current situation that is challenging your ability to find joy? How can the group be praying for you?
- Share some of the ways you have been encouraged by others when you needed it the most. Also, what are some practical, tangible ways to bring joy to someone when you see that it is lacking?

Next Week's Life Group: Real Joy: Finding Joy in Denying Self

Next Week's Story: Philippians 1:18b-30

Our Church's Definition of a Biblical Disciple of Jesus

A person who is committed to *following, being changed by,*
and *on mission* with Jesus (taken from Matthew 4:19).

The Purpose of Life Groups

Life Groups are where we connect with God and with others through relationships – growing in spiritual maturity as biblical disciples of Jesus and inspiring a culture of discipleship as we do life together. Life Groups are loving, safe, and interactive places where people can be authentic and vulnerable as they explore, experience, serve, and grow in relationship with Jesus, the Word, and others. (*Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11*)
