



REAL JOY

A STUDY
THROUGH
PHILIPPIANS

WEEK 2
JANUARY 12

LIFE
GROUPS

GUIDE

FINDING JOY

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
Philippians 1:3*

GETTING STARTED

Describe your most magical childhood memory.

STORY BACKGROUND

Paul, Silas, and Luke visited Philippi, a Roman colony in Macedonia, on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40). They met and converted Lydia, who became a founding member of the Philippian church. Luke recounted an episode in which Paul and Silas were imprisoned for casting a demon out of a slave girl who had the power of fortune-telling. Paul famously converted his jailer, as well.

Philippians was likely written around 61 or 62 AD as Paul was under arrest in Rome. The letter was delivered by Epaphroditus, a faithful Philippian who had been sent to help Paul in Rome. Epaphroditus had become ill and nearly died. The Philippians were quite worried, so Paul was eager to settle their fears and see that he had recovered.

Paul's tone in the letter is affectionate. He is thankful to the Philippians for their help in his ministry and continued faithfulness to the Lord. Although he is in prison, he is shockingly optimistic about the spread of the gospel message and unconcerned about whether he was to remain imprisoned, set free, or executed. The letter is centered on a poem in Philippians 2 concerning the pre-incarnational glory of the Lord Jesus, His humble incarnation, His humiliation on the cross, and His exaltation by the Father over the entire world. Paul's big theme is that true joy is found in humble submission to Christ. Just as He had submitted to His Father's will, demonstrating the greatest humility, we should humble ourselves before God and one another. In fact, by humbling ourselves before Jesus, we play a role in His incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection; placing ourselves at His feet in His final exalted state.

Paul uses Timothy and Epaphroditus as living examples of Christ-like humility. They are faithful ministers that should be imitated. Paul, likewise, has given up his own privilege in order to follow Jesus. Worldly riches are nothing to grasp in comparison to our place in Heaven. This, again, is where we find true joy.

IN COMMUNITY



STORY: Philippians 1:3-5 (Read aloud in 4 different versions)

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.

- Who is in Paul's prayers?
- What feelings does Paul have toward the readers of Philippians?
- Between the different versions, what differences did you find?



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

- Who are you thankful for?
- Do you pray with thanksgiving? Why or why not?
- Do you pray with joy? Why or why not?



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

- How does your life reflect the gospel?
- Does the gospel bring you joy? Why or why not?
- What needs to change so you have more joy in your life?

Next Week's Life Group: Bridge Over Troubled Waters

Next Week's Story: Acts 10:13-15

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*)
