

WARM-UP

- What is the most peaceful image you've ever seen?
Tell us what you saw and why it brought you so much peace.
- When was the last time you rejoiced over something?
What happened and what did you do to express your joy?
- Who would you consider as a role model for strength? Why?

WORD *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Despite his circumstances, Paul's letter to the Philippians overflows with joy. We can see that his joy was neither anchored on his external situations nor on his internal ability to stay positive. Rather, Paul rejoiced because he knew that God was in control. To rejoice in the Lord means more than finding joy in Him. It means finding joy again, over and over. In this lesson, we will look at why we can rejoice in all circumstances, according to the apostle Paul.

1 | In Christ, we can have peace in the midst of anxiety.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:7

As believers, we can experience the peace of God. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we have been reconciled to God and placed in a position to receive His favor. It's easy to be at peace when everything around us is calm and quiet. But the peace we have in Christ *surpasses all understanding*. Paul assures us that even in the midst of trials and chaos, God's peace will guard our hearts and minds. We can trust God and be completely confident that He is in our midst, working to bring everything together for our good. Because of this, we can rejoice no matter our situations. How have you experienced the peace of God recently? How did His peace guard your heart and mind?

2 | In Christ, we can have contentment despite lack.

¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I 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. PHILIPPIANS 4:11-12

Paul knew what it was like to be in need. But all the difficulties he experienced only served to teach him to be content. Contentment was not automatic for Paul. It was something he learned as God allowed him to experience both abundance and lack. In the same way, as believers, we can choose to be content wherever God takes us and with whatever He brings into our lives. Our joy comes not from our earthly

possessions or anything we've gained in this life, but from God who provides all our needs. What does Matthew 6:26 say about God as a provider? How does this truth enable you to be content in Him?

3 | In Christ, we can have strength despite trouble.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

God did not promise Paul a trouble-free life. On the contrary, Paul faced much trouble throughout his lifetime. But he was able to rejoice in the midst of it all because he knew that God was the source of his strength. Because of that, Paul was confident that he could overcome all these. In the same way, we can have joy despite our troubles because we know that we can experience God's power in the midst of it. Our joy comes not from believing that God can solve our problems, but from the fact that we get to know God more and experience His reality in our lives as we go through our trials. When was the last time you experienced the power of God in your life? How did this experience make you feel and how did it affect the way you pursue God?

APPLICATION

- Look for two or three Bible verses that talk about the peace of God. Write them down and memorize them this week. Declare them by faith whenever you feel anxious.
- Would you say you're content in Christ, in spite of your current situation? What can you do to grow in contentment every day?
- Who can you encourage this week to have joy in all circumstances? What are you willing to do to help him or her *rejoice in the Lord always*?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His peace that is based on who He is, not our circumstances. Thank Him for guarding your heart and mind and giving you joy as you pursue Him.
- Ask God for grace to be content in any situation. Pray that your joy will always be anchored on who He is and not what you have.
- Pray for those you know who are going through a difficult time this week. Pray that they will not only have the grace to rejoice in the midst of the situation, but that they would draw even closer to God.



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