



Joy Where You Are

A Study in Philippians



Celebration Church Spring 2024
with Sarah Stephens



“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

Philippians 1:9-11





A Message from Sarah....

I've heard it said, that a truth discovered is more powerful than a truth delivered. As we open God's word we discover God's truth.

When I'm in a tough season I'm reminded that the joy of the Lord gives us strength (Neh 8:10). We cannot always choose our circumstances, but we can choose how we think about those circumstances and choose how to process those circumstances in the light of truth. The book of Philippians is chocked full of truth to help us walk in JOY that isn't at the mercy of circumstances. And with God's joy comes God's strength.

As we walk through each chapter together, my heart is to help you sharpen your ability to study God's word and discover His truth for yourself. Philippians is a great book to learn how to do personal, inductive Bible study.

What's Inductive Bible Study? It boils down to asking these three questions when we read God's word:

- Observation – What Does It Say?
- Interpretation – What Does It Mean?
- Application – What Does It Mean to Me?

Transformation happens when we apply God's Word to our lives (Luke 11:28).

If a Bible Study isn't producing transformation in your life, then you basically just audited a class, and let's be honest, "ain't nobody got time for that!" We are expecting God's word to TRANSFORM us over the time we spend together in the next four weeks.



Philippians: Joy Where You Are

Understanding the Source of Joy

Finding Joy in Serving

Growing Joy in Believing

Releasing Joy in Giving



Sarah Stephens



Week 1: Understanding the Source of Joy

Key Verses:

Phil 1:3-6, “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Phil 1:9-11, “And this is my prayer; that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, that that you may be able to discern that is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – the glory and praise of God.”

Phil 1:21, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”





I. The Source of Joy – Philippians Chapter 1

A. Observations

What are some of the things that stand out to you in the time and era that this book was written to the church in Philippi? (Who, What, When, Where)

B. Interpretation

What does scripture say is the source of Joy? (John 15:11, John 17:13, Jeremiah 15:16, Psalm 16:11, Romans 14:17)



What is the connection between joy and suffering? Are they mutually exclusive? (Psalm 16, Heb 12:2, Ps 126:5, Luke 10:17, James 1:2, Hab 3:18, 1 Peter 4:12)

C. Application

What is the connection between joy and our thought lives? (Phil 1:21, 2 Cor 10:3-6, Romans 8:5-13, 1 Cor 2:16)

Draw how thoughts are born – and where deliberate interruption happens:



II. Takeaways

1. The source of all joy is God – and His will is for you to have joy in all seasons. He never runs out.
2. Your thought life – not your circumstances – determines whether you will have joy.
3. We can't pick our circumstances but we have a choice in how we think about these things.
4. This week, I will practice deliberate interruptions and choose to place my thoughts under the truth of God's word.

III. At Home:

Read: Philippians 1

- Observation – What Does It Say?
- Interpretation – What Does It Mean?
- Application – What Does It Mean to Me?

The fruit of application is TRANSFORMATION

Record one truth you will apply to your life from Philippians 1 that will TRANSFORM how you live:

Table Discussion Prompts:

1. Let's go around the table and introduce ourselves to each other.
2. Is there one verse of scripture that stood out to you tonight – how did it capture your attention? Why?
3. Which of tonight's "Take Aways" will you put into action this week?



Week 2: Finding Joy in Serving

Key Verses:

Phil 2:3, “Do nothing out of selfish conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”

Phil 2:5 – 11, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”





I. Joy In Serving – Philippians Chapter 2

A. Observations

1. How does Christ's example of joy in serving challenge and inspire you? (Phil 2:6-11)

B. Interpretation

1. What does being united with Christ produce in us? (Phil 2:1-4)
2. Describe how Philippians challenges us to serve. (Phil 2:13 -14).



C. Application

Understanding the history of this church (Acts 16) and hearing Paul promising to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to them – share your thoughts on the role serving and community plays in your faith walk.

II. Take Aways

1. There's a correlation between joy and being united with Christ.
2. Comparison kills joy. It either promotes my pride or diminishes Christ's call on my life – neither brings him glory.
3. Joy cannot be sustained in isolation. Community matters – I've been called to serve others and also to be encouraged by others.
4. This week, I will look to Christ's example and ask the Holy Spirit to help me serve someone in my community.



III. At Home:

Read: Philippians 2

- Observation – What Does It Say?
- Interpretation – What Does It Mean?
- Application – What Does It Mean to Me?

The fruit of application is **TRANSFORMATION**

Record one truth you will apply to your life from Philippians 2 that will **TRANSFORM** how you live:

Table Discussion Prompts:

- We talked tonight about how comparison kills joy. Why do you think we are so quick to compare ourselves to others?
- There's a correlation between being united with Christ and joy...have you experienced a season where this was true for you?
- Joy needs community - so we can be encouraged and encourage others. What does this look like in real life for you?



Week 3: Growing Joy in Believing

Key Verses:

Phil 3:12-14, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Phil 3:20-21, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly body so that they will be like his glorious body.”





I. Joy In Believing – Philippians Chapter 3

A. Observations

1. Where you place your confidence as an impact on your joy. What are you confident in? (2 Cor 5:21, Gal 2:20, Phil 3:10, Heb 4)

B. Interpretation

1. Joy looks forward. (Phil 3:14)
2. Joy needs community (Phil 3:17)
3. Joy is steadfast (Phil 1:6, Phil 3:20)



C. Application

1. Joy stands firm, and so will I. (Phil 4:1, Hab 3:17-19)

II. Take Aways

1. Where you place your confidence has an impact on your joy.
2. Joy looks to the future with hope because Christ will not fail to complete his work in me.
3. Joy needs community – I can't run with people who are running in the same direction as me.
4. Joy stands firm – Christ brings everything under his control, and I can trust his heart and his timing. If it's not good yet, God's not done yet.



**III. At Home:
Read Philippians 3**

- **Observation – What Does It Say?**
- **Interpretation – What Does It Mean?**
- **Application – What Does It Mean to Me?**

The fruit of application is TRANSFORMATION

Record one truth you will apply to your life from Philippians 3 that will TRANSFORM how you live:

Table Discussion Prompts:

- We shared tonight, God the Father is all knowing but Jesus has felt it - how does this give you confidence when you are in hard season?
- Paul challenges us to “press toward the goal” - joy looks forward. What does this look like for you?
- Read Phil 3:17. Joy needs community. Share what this verse means in practical terms.
- Which of tonight’s “Take Aways” do you see yourself putting into practice this week?



Week 4: Releasing Joy in Giving

Key Verses:

Phil 4:4-5, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”

Phil 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Phil 4:11-13, “...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”





I. Joy In Giving – Philippians Chapter 4

A. Observations

1. Cultivating joy requires us to give grace to each other and sometimes give up the right, to be right. (Phil 4:2) Can you relate the two women Paul mentions by name, Euodia and Syntyche?

B. Interpretation

1. Joy gives to give, not to get. Giving has to be voluntary to be blessed. (Phil 4:14-17)
2. When you give it doesn't go out of your. Life, but into your future. (Phil 4:17-18, Luke 6:37-38)
3. Joy is content, contentment isn't based on what we hold but who is holding us! (Phil 4:11-13, Col 1:17)



C. Application

1. Am I content? Contentment means being satisfied and at rest with where God has you, despite what's happening around you. It's not natural or automatic, it must be learned. (Phil 4:11)
2. With joy comes strength. (Phil 4:13-14) Father, is there an area of my life lacking joy and strength?

II. Take Aways

1. Joy sometimes means I give up the right to be right, for the sake of the gospel.
2. Joy means I give to give, not to get – and I can live in contentment.
3. Supernatural joy comes with supernatural strength.



III. At Home:

Read: Philippians 4

- Observation – What Does It Say?
- Interpretation – What Does It Mean?
- Application – What Does It Mean to Me?

The fruit of application is **TRANSFORMATION**

Record one truth you will apply to your life from Philippians 4 that will **TRANSFORM** how you live:

Table Discussion Prompts:

- Have you ever been in a season that required you to give up the “right to be right”? Was your joy impacted in that season?
- How would you explain contentment to a 5-year-old? What parallels do you see between joy and contentment?
- In giving, we have our needs met. Do you feel challenged to be more generous in an area of your life? (Read Phil 4:17-18, Luke 6:37-78)
- What verse from Philippians has had the greatest impact on you over the last four weeks?



Keep In Touch

www.WoodlandsCelebration.com

www.SarahStephens.com

Facebook: WoodlandsCelebration

Instagram: WoodlandsCelebration

Email: FrontDesk@WoodlandsCelebration.com

