

Fighting for Joy

in the crucible of ministry

XSI 2013

Philippians 4:4

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

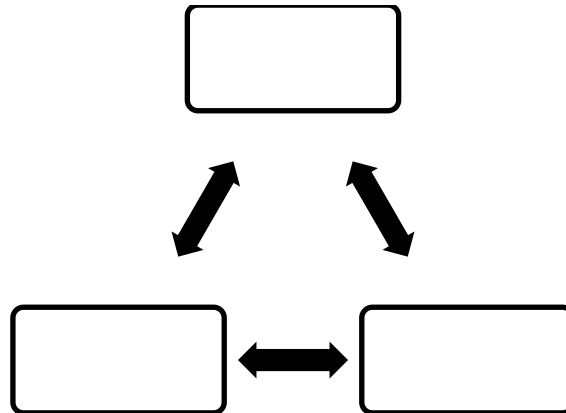
Assumptions:

- We all want to have joy
- We all have some level of confusion about what joy is
- We all have some level of confusion about how to get joy
- We all have some level of confusion about how to keep joy
- We all (believers in Jesus) are commanded to be joyful
- We all (believers in Jesus) are called to a life of ministry

“We all want to have joy.”

“We all have some level of confusion about what joy is, how we get it, and how we keep it.”

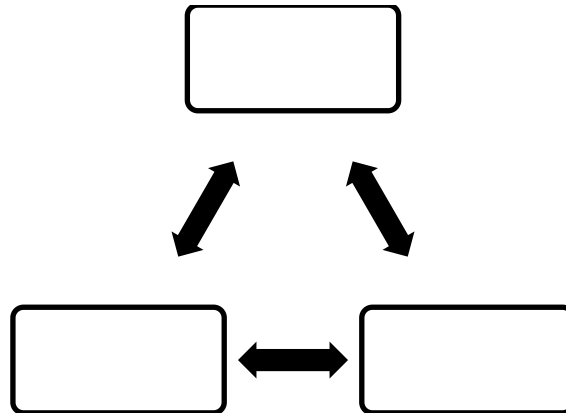
- Webster says “the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires; delight”
- **Jeremiah 2:13** -- For My people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.
- **What do our cisterns produce?**
 - **Perpetual Discontentment**
 - **Eph. 4:17-19** -- ¹⁷Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.



- Phil. 4:10-13,19** -- ¹⁰I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. ¹¹I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹²I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. . . . ¹⁹**And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

○ Perpetual Anxiety

- Matthew 6:25-34** -- ²⁵"This is why I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? ²⁷Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don't labor or spin thread. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these! ³⁰If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't He do much more for you—you of little faith? ³¹So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



- **Hebrews 13:5** -- Your life should be free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He Himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you.
- **1 Peter 5:7** -- Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

BIG IDEA:

We will find joy in the Lord as we intentionally lose our lives in Christ and live to give our lives away together for Christ. This is the life we are meant to live in the crucible of ministry.

Intentionally losing our lives...

Luke 9:23-25 -- ²³Then He said to them all, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it. ²⁵What is a man benefited if he gains the whole world, yet loses or forfeits himself?

John 12:24-25 -- ²⁴"I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. ²⁵The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

in Christ...

- **Rooting our identity in Christ & His purposes**
- **Refer to HANDOUT & Walking in Victory**

(therefore we) live to give our lives away together for Christ...

2 Cor. 5:14-15 -- ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all, then all died. ¹⁵And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

Heb. 12:28 -- Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe...

1 John 4:19 -- We love because He first loved us.

This is the life we are meant to live in the crucible of ministry.

Crucible = a place or set of circumstances where people or things are subjected to forces that test them and often make them change

2 Cor. 1:8-9 -- ⁸For we don't want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that took place in Asia: we were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life. ⁹Indeed, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

2 Cor. 1:3-7 -- ³Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. ⁴He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵For as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so through Christ our comfort also overflows. ⁶If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is experienced in your endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will share in the comfort.

Col. 1:24-29 -- ²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for His body, that is, the church. ²⁵I have become its servant, according to God's administration that was given to me for you, to make God's message fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints. ²⁷God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

A Test Case – Paul's Joy in Philippians

Phil. 1:3-5 -- ³I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴always praying with **joy** for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Phil. 1:15-21 -- ¹⁵To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and strife, but others out of good will. ¹⁶These do so out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷the others proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, seeking to cause me anxiety in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What does it matter? Just that in every way, whether out of false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed. And in

this I **rejoice**. Yes, and I **will rejoice**¹⁹ because I know this will lead to my deliverance through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.²⁰ My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.²¹ For me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

Phil. 1:22-30 -- ²²Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose.²³ I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ—which is far better—²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.²⁵ Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for **your progress and joy in the faith**,²⁶ so that, because of me, your confidence may grow in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.²⁷ Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel,²⁸ not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God.²⁹ For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,³⁰ having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

Phil. 2:1-4 -- If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,² **fulfill my joy** by thinking the same way, having the same love, sharing the same feelings, focusing on one goal.³ Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.⁴ Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Phil. 2:14-18 -- ¹⁴Do everything without grumbling and arguing,¹⁵ so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.¹⁶ Hold firmly (**HOLDING FORTH**) to the message of life. Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing.¹⁷ But even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, **I am glad and rejoice with all of you**.¹⁸ **In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me.**

Phil. 2:25-30 -- ²⁵But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus—my brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need—²⁶since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick.²⁷ Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have one grief on top of another.²⁸ For this reason, I am very eager to send him **so that you may rejoice** when you see him again and I may be less anxious.²⁹ Therefore, welcome him in the Lord **with all joy** and hold men like him in honor,³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me.

Phil. 3:1 -- Finally, my brothers, **rejoice in the Lord**. To write to you again about this is no trouble for me and is a protection for you.

Phil. 4:1-4 -- So then, my brothers, you are dearly loved and longed for—**my joy** and crown. In this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord.³ Yes, I also ask you, true partner, to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in the book of life.⁴ **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

Phil. 4:10-14 -- ¹⁰I **rejoiced** in the Lord greatly that once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it.¹¹ I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.¹² I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.¹³ I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.¹⁴ Still, you did well by sharing with me in my hardship.

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