

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – November 6, 2022

Theme: The World Eagerly Awaits Your Manifestation Topic: Manifesting Joy

Main Texts: Philippians 4:4 – 7; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Key verse: Philippians 4:4 – ‘Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!’ (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: The book of Philippians is filled with exhortations to Christians about having a good attitude. In chapter one Apostle Paul talks about his attitude of desiring to magnify Christ whether by life or death. In chapter two he encourages the brethren to cultivate the mind or the attitude which was in Christ. In Philippians 4:4-9, he says that we need to have an attitude of joy. “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!*” (v. 4). Sometimes we use the words joy and happiness interchangeably, but they are not the same. Happiness is primarily an outward emotional reaction to pleasant circumstances. But joy is a deep, inner characteristic that is not affected by circumstances. Joy, in fact serves to sustain us through those difficult times.

Read Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (a) Where does joy come from? And what does it mean to be joyful? (b) What makes obeying this command to rejoice in any circumstance hard for you to do? What do you think robs you of joy or rejoicing the most? (c) From your answer to 1a and 1b, what is God saying to you about the times when you had struggled to obey this command to be joyful or had been robbed of joy? What are you going to do about what God is saying to you here?

The Church faces opposition from within and without, yet Paul, writes a letter about joy, telling the Philippians to rejoice. From a human perspective, it doesn't make sense. And yet the path to joy is to choose to rejoice. So, Paul says “... *Again, I will say, rejoice!*” (Philippians 4:4 NKJV). We would misapply God's command here, if we understood Him to mean that believers should deny or never feel sadness or grief. As we see in the Psalms, the Psalmist readily expressed his feelings of despair or sadness to God, as well as when he was happy. But in doing so, he gains perspective, re-focusing his thoughts on the Lord and His great mercies. And by the end of the psalm his mood has changed, even though his circumstances are no different. Thus, to rejoice in the Lord always does not mean that we deny our physical or emotional hurts.

2. Read Philippians 4:6-7; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:16 (a) Identify the action words commanded in those passages concerning joy. What do these words teach us about how to manifest joy in any circumstances of life? (b) From 1Thessalonians 1:6-10, what happens when we manifest joy? (c) In the light of the challenges we face as individuals and as a nation, what tips do these passages in 2a & 2b offer which you can apply to our situation? Which one applies to you personally?

Apostle Paul illustrates this choice: He had been incarcerated for well over two years and was facing possible execution on trumped up charges (Acts 21:28). Though he should have been released, the Roman governor kept him in custody in the hope that Paul would offer him a bribe, and because he wanted to do the Jews a favour (Acts 24:26, 27). The next governor also, for political reasons, refused to release him (Acts 25:9). On arriving in Rome many of the pastors there not only distanced themselves from Paul the prisoner but used his situation to advance their selfish ambitions (Phil. 1:15,17). So, Paul had good reason to be bitter with the system, with God and his fellow believers. Paul should be the one needing cheering and encouragement. Instead, his short letter to Philippians is filled with joy. Amazing!

3. (a) What key to the Thessalonians' joyfulness can we find in 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:16-18? (b) The Thessalonian believers joy despite their trials caused the gospel to spread even further. How does this encourage you to manifest joy? (c) What can happen when we fail to manifest joy? In view of this, what are you going to start doing about the situations in your life which seem to be stealing your joy in the Lord?

Prayer: *Dear Father, please fill me with Your overwhelming joy which is unlike anything this world can offer. It brings peace, trust, and hope and with that a rest because I know You are in control. I ask In Jesus' Name, Amen!*