

“JOYFUL IN DISCIPLESHIP” PHILIPPIANS 3:1-21

*Because of the incomparable joy of knowing Christ,
we live with a new power and purpose as citizens of heaven.*

After planting the church in Philippi during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40), Paul now writes to them ten years later from Roman imprisonment. Amazingly, he is not discouraged but joyful! In fact, the word “joy” appears fourteen times in these four short chapters. *In this passage, Paul calls the Philippians to rejoice in the incomparable joy of knowing Christ. In doing so, he calls them, and the church today, to place their confidence in Christ and not themselves (vv. 1-11), to pursue Christ with all that they have (vv. 12-16), and to live for him in every area of life as they await His glorious return (vv. 17-21).*

APPLYING THE WORD

Read Philippians 3:1-21 aloud and pray that the Lord will apply this passage to your group.

Introductory Question: In what ways do people search for joy in their everyday lives?

The Joy of Knowing Christ (vv. 1-11)

- What difference does it make knowing that rejoicing in Christ is a command, not a suggestion (v. 1)?
- How does false teaching and self-righteousness rob, distract, and destroy true joy in Christ (vv. 2-6)?
- How is knowing Christ currently transforming the way you live and view your life (vv. 7-11)?

The Joy of Pursuing Christ (vv. 12-21)

- Why are both passion and resolve necessary when it comes to joyfully pursuing Christ (vv. 12-16)?
- Like Paul, why is it important to “forget what lies behind” to joyfully pursue Christ today (vv. 12-16)?
- How does the reality that you are a citizen of heaven transform your life this week (vv. 17-21)?

PRAYING THE WORD

Philippians 3:1-21 prompts us to pray for joyful resolve. As you pray this passage, consider asking someone to pray that we would be a joyful people because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (vv. 1-11). Ask someone else to pray for passion and resolve to pursue Christ above all else (vv. 12-16). Finally, ask someone to pray that we would live as citizens of heaven to shine as gospel lights on earth (vv. 17-21).

STAYING IN THE STORY

Day 1	The need for God to transform our hearts (vv. 2-3; Deuteronomy 10:12-22)
Day 2	How Saul of Tarsus becomes the Apostle Paul (vv. 4-6; Acts 9:1-19)
Day 3	The incomparable joy of knowing the Lord our God (vv. 7-11; Jeremiah 9:23-24)
Day 4	Caleb’s example of wholly following the Lord our God (vv. 12-16; Joshua 14:6-15)
Day 5	Living as citizens of heaven in our everyday lives (vv. 17-21; Matthew 5:13-16)