

CHOOSING JOY

Be joyful always...

1 Thessalonians 5:16 (NIV)

❖ Recognizing the Things that Steal our Joy:

"I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"

John 15:11 (NLT)

1. Our CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. Other PEOPLE.

"Stay away from negative people. They have a problem for every solution."

3. Personal POSSESSIONS.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 10:25 (NIV)

4. Outside WORRY.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear... For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

Luke 12:22, 30-31 (NIV)

❖ Understanding Paul's Joy:

1. Paul's PAST Life.

To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! What anyone else dares to boast about--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

2. Paul's PRESENT Life.

... to keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

1 Corinthians 12:7b-9 (NIV)

3. Paul's FUTURE Life.

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Philippians 1:12-14 (NIV)

❖ Introducing Paul's Letter of Joy:

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 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. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. 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 until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:1-11 (NIV)

1. Remembering our FELLOWSHIP brings me Joy.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you.

Philippians 1:1-3 (NIV)

2. Recognizing our PARTNERSHIP brings me Joy.

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.

Philippians 1:4-6 (NIV)

3. Realizing our OPPORTUNITIES brings me Joy.

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 until 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 (NIV)

"Worriers never get anything accomplished, but warriors see the victory ahead."

... then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Philippians 2:2 (NIV)