

THE PATH THAT LEADS TO JOY

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

Philippians 3:1 (NIV)

❖ Recognizing the Subtle, but Dangerous, Detours from our Joy:

Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh--though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Philippians 3:2-6 (NIV)

1. The Dangerous Detour of choosing RULES over a REAL RELATIONSHIP.

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:4-5 (NIV)

2. The Dangerous Detour of allowing FEELINGS to usurp BIBLICAL TRUTH.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:3 (NIV)

3. The Dangerous Detour of making GOOD WORKS equivalent to SAVING FAITH.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

❖ Choosing to Make a Change of Direction for our Joy:

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:7-11 (NIV)

1. Recognizing the DEAD-END of PRIDE and POSITION. (vs. 7)

Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:31 (NIV)

2. Recognizing the FALSE PROMISES of POSSESSIONS. (vs. 8)

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Luke 12:15 (NIV)

3. Choosing the path that is filled with the PASSION and PURPOSE of Jesus. (vs. 9-11)

And since we are his children, we will share his treasures—for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Romans 8:17 (NLT)

❖ Pursuing the Pathway to Joy:

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. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Philippians 3:12-16 (NIV)

1. Keep MOVING OUT because LOOKING BACK is the first step to GOING BACK.

But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

Luke 9:62 (NLT)

2. Keep MOVING UP by keeping your EYES on the PRIZE in the SKIES.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:1 (NIV)

3. Keep MOVING ON... it's hard to GROW if you are STANDING STILL.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so keep on walking in Him.

Colossians 2:6 (NAS)

❖ Closing Challenge: What PATH are you walking on? Is it growing your JOY?