



Happiness is a chance; joy is a choice. The book of Philippians is full of wisdom regarding how we can learn to rejoice in the Lord regardless of our circumstances. Life is full of potential joy killers, but faith is full of joy fillers. And we get to choose!

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Paul mentions *joy* or *rejoicing* sixteen times in the four chapters of Philippians (he understood the importance of always *rediscovering joy*). What time in your life would you say was the most joyful? What were the contributing factors to your joy?

2 LIFE CAN put joy in jail. All of us deal with many things capable of incarcerating our joy. Paul actually wrote this book from jail. No matter what life threw at him, Paul kept discovering joy. **Read Philippians 1:1-2.** Paul mentions Jesus 3 times in these 2 verses and will mention him 51 times in 104 verses. Rick mentioned that *“Joy is your present possession when Christ is your constant obsession.”* How have you seen that to be true in your life? What is one thing you currently do to keep Jesus on your mind constantly?

3 JESUS IS... my purpose. Paul's goal was not a comfortable life but a meaningful life, and he found meaning in exalting Jesus. **Read Philippians 1:12-13.** What was clearly the most important purpose Paul had in life? What does a person's purpose have to do with the joy he or she experiences in life?

4 JESUS IS... my pattern. Paul knew that there is no joy to be found in pity parties. That's why he intentionally kept the focus off himself and on others. He learned that from Jesus. **Read Philippians 2:3-7.** Putting others first seems counterintuitive to pursuing personal joy. Why does it work?

5 JESUS IS... my prize. Paul was obsessed with pursuing the One who had pursued him. **Read Philippians 3:10-14.** If you are missing joy, maybe it's because you're aiming at the wrong prize. What are some of the “prizes” people often aim at and how do they come up short in providing joy? Follow up discussion: Rick said that *“You find joy not in pursuing happiness but in pursuing Jesus.”* How would you explain that truth to someone else?

6 JESUS IS... my provision. Paul knew Christ would supply all he needed to accomplish the purposes for which he was created, so he refused to live in the prison of pity and resentment and joyfulness. **Read Philippians 4:10-13.** What resonates with you from these verses? What is one provision you've received lately that was unexpected? Did you think about the gift as a provision from God? Why or why not?

7 FAITH CAN find joy in jail. Paul's joy was not a matter of chance; it was a matter of choice. When Jesus is your passion the whole world is your sanctuary. **Read Acts 16:25.** How have you seen God use someone's decision to choose joy become a powerful witness for others to find Jesus (see **Acts 16:31-34** for an example)? What are some practical examples of how you can choose joy today even in the midst of difficult circumstances?

