



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** Rick began by reminding us that *“the way to joy begins with the way we choose to think.”* Why is this so crucial to **rediscovering joy**? What role does our perspective play in regards to the way we choose to think?

**2 Joy killer: “I must control the outcome.”** Many people stay so frustrated because circumstances and people constantly refuse to obey their orders. Paul, on the other hand, realized he had no control over the outcomes he was facing. He also knew they had no control over his joy. **Read Philippians 1:12-21.** What circumstances was Paul facing and how did they open up new areas of ministry for him rather than confine him? Follow up discussion: What would your first reaction be if you were in a similar place? Are you more prone to try to control the outcomes or to trust God in the midst of them?

**3 Joy filler: “I can choose my outlook.”** There is a kind of reflection that produces resentment, and there is a kind that results in rejoicing. Paul intentionally chose the latter. **Read Philippians 4:8.** What enabled Paul to choose such a positive outlook in the face of hard circumstances? What is one thing you can do to consistently choose a positive outlook?

**4 The gospel cannot be chained.** Paul does not think about what is being done to him but what is being done through him. Rather than think *“Why has this happened?”* he chose to ask *“How can what happened be leveraged to tell the story of*

*Jesus?”* **Read Philippians 1:12-13.** How did God use the chains on Paul’s wrists to advance the gospel? What kinds of “chains” in your life has God used to spread the good news about Jesus?

**5 Spiritual help cannot be chained.** There is no chain that can fetter the prayers of God’s people, and there is no place that can lock out the ministry of God’s Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is prompted by the kneeling of the saints (see **Philippians 1:19**). Share an example of a time when you experienced help as a result of people praying for you. What is one thing we can be praying on your behalf for this week?

**6 Courage cannot be chained.** The opposite of joy is not sadness; it is fear. A believer can grieve and still have joy, but joy will always be absent where worry and anxiety are present. Paul was courageous because he was certain of his deliverance even if he didn’t know what it would look like. **Read Philippians 1:20-21.** *“To live is \_\_\_\_\_, and to die is \_\_\_\_\_.”* What are you putting in those blanks, and does it bring a joy that cannot be chained?

**7 JOY IS THE OUTLOOK when Jesus decides the outcome.** We go through a lot in life we would not choose, but nothing we go through can keep us from choosing joy. Who is someone you know who does this well? How can we intentionally surrender outcomes to God?

