



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 *“Everybody wants to be happy, and almost everybody thinks the way to get happy is to give the highest priority to the pursuit of their own interests.”* How have you experienced this to be true in your life recently? Why is pursuing our own interests not helpful in finding joy?

2 Read Philippians 2:1-2. Paul called the church at Philippi to complete his joy by pursuing unity with one another. What specific areas of unity did Paul desire for them? How can followers of Jesus show their unity in practical ways?

3 JOY IS... a relational challenge. The believers in Philippi were struggling to be like-minded and one in spirit (Paul even had to tell them, *“Do everything without grumbling or complaining.”* **Philippians 2:14**). Underneath all the frustration was a serious relational breach. **Read Philippians 4:2-3.** Are any of you in a situation like this right now? If so, how have you tried to resolve the conflict? How can one fractured relationship divide a community?

4 Popular wisdom says “looking out for #1” is the path to joy. Real-life experience begs to differ. Paul says the root cause of relational challenges is the failure to put others first. **Read Philippians 2:3-4.** What does it mean to consider someone “better than yourself” (v. 3)? Share a time when putting someone else first brought you and them great joy.

5 HUMILITY IS... an intentional mindset. Read Philippians 2:5. Humility is not something we are born with; it is something we choose to put on. Why is humility a difficult thing to choose? What does this tell us about ourselves?

6 JESUS IS... our counter-cultural model. Read Philippians 2:6-8. Jesus intentionally took an unnatural path to joy. He chose the path of downward mobility. Though culture often views humility as a weakness, in what ways did Jesus’ humility convey and require strength? What are the benefits of choosing this “counter-cultural, counter-intuitive way of Jesus”?

7 TO BE FULL OF JOY I must empty myself. Rick reminded us that *“joy increases when self decreases.”* As you think about the situations you are facing in your life are you willing to try the way of Jesus? How might your life look different if you did? What is one thing you need to empty yourself of this week to become more Christlike?

Close by reading **Philippians 2:9-11** and spending some time in prayer for each other.

