

Joy to the World! Say Thank You

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹²I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.
Philippians 4:11-13

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. ⁷So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. ⁸God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. ¹⁰For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. ¹¹May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. Philippians 1:3-11

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- When you hear the word Joy, what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- Do you think you can experience true Joy regardless of your outward circumstances? Why or why not?
- Is it easy for you to express gratitude to people that have had an impact on your life or is it awkward and hard for you? Why?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- How does expressing gratitude contribute to experiencing true Joy?
- Read Philippians 1:6. Paul gives a reason for his contentment in spite of his present circumstances (prison). What was his reason for contentment, and how can that be our reason for contentment too?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Pastor Lane said in the message that we often get stuck in the “what’s” of Christmas and miss the “why” of Christmas. What is the “why” of Christmas, and how should that change the way we view the “what’s”?
- Paul’s prayer for the church was that they would grow in wisdom and understanding (verse 9) so that they would be ready for Jesus return. What is the wisdom and understanding that Paul is talking about, and how do we grow in it?
- If true Joy expresses gratitude, how can we get better about expressing gratitude, even when it seems mushy or awkward?

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to be Emmanuel, God with us. Help us to focus more on the why than the what this Christmas so that we can experience your Joy. In Jesus' name, amen.

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Who do you need to say thank you to? Write a letter, send a text, make a phone call, whatever it takes... take time to say thank you to someone who has invested in your life.
- Start a gratitude journal. Start focusing on the things that are good in your life instead of allowing the negative things overwhelm you.