

## **How to Have Joy?**

### **Philippians 4**

**When we worry, we rob ourselves of joy.**

**Some of us have worry patterns; however, it is hard to see them in ourselves.**

**So I recommend talking to a friend that may identify them for you.**

**Here are some worry patterns that cause undue worry.**

**All of these are unhealthy.**

**Catastrophizing is when we expect the worst possible outcomes.**

**Minimization is when we downplay the good things.**

**All-or-nothing thinking is when we interpret a situation as all good or all bad.**

**Overgeneralization is when we believe that having one negative experience means we will always have this negative experience.**

**Negative attention is when we focus on the negative things that went wrong rather than on the positive ones.**

**Rumination is when we think about something distressing over and over again.**

**Mind reading is when we believe we know what others think even though we haven't asked them what they think.**

**Again, these are the wrong ways to think, so how do you not think like this?**

**What Does The Bible Say?**

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work. (Philippians 4:1 NLT)

**We are to stay true to the Lord.**

**What Does The Bible Say?**

2 Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. (Philippians 4:2 NLT)

**First, Euodia & Syntyche are members of the same church in Philippi.**

**Second, they are amid a disagreement causing strife and disunity.**

**Third, we do know that it is not a doctrinal issue.**

**Fourth, Paul expects them to respond positively.**

3 And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers,

whose names are written in the Book of Life. (Philippians 4:3 NLT)

**Fifth, sometimes a division is so deep and a dispute so long-standing that it requires accountability from someone else, an objective third party who can serve as an arbitrator.**

**How Can You Obey?**

**Get along with each other.**

**Quarreling with others robs us of joy.**

**What Does The Bible Say?**

4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! 5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. (Philippians 4:4–5 NLT)

**The word considerate means gentle and kind.**

**How can you be gentle and kind in all you do?**

**Remember, it is almost time to retire to heaven.**

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.

Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7 NLT)

**Don't hold in your worry; share it with God.**

**Share everything with Him.**

**When you live in Christ Jesus, you develop a new perspective as you see the world. You start to see people and events as He sees them.**

**How Can We Obey?**

**Pray this prayer at night, “Lord, since you are going to stay up tonight, there is no need for both of us to worry about this, so I am going to sleep.”**

**You can have joy even when you are unhappy. The world ascribes value to salary, wealth, power, appearance, and fame.**

**God’s love has made you essential to Him. Therefore, without having to prove yourself, you are free to enjoy your life, no matter your circumstances.**

**Stay true to the Lord means you love the Lord the way He wants you to love Him.**

### **Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves

has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

### **Additional Notes:**

#### **Scripture used in Talking Theology:**

12 “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12 NLT)

9 “Anyone who dishonors father or mother must be put to death. Such a person is guilty of a capital offense. (Leviticus 20:9 NLT)

18 “Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him.

19 In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. 20 The parents must say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21 Then all

the men of his town must stone him to death. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid. (Deuteronomy 21:18–21 NLT)

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. (2 Timothy 3:1–2 NLT)

20 My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your mother's instruction. (Proverbs 6:20 NLT)

20 Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20 NLT)

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 2 "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: 3 If you honor



your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” (Ephesians 6:1-3 NLT)

### **Explore:**

On his second missionary journey Paul visited Philippi. Through his ministry there several people trusted Christ as their Savior. Some of these were Lydia and her family and the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:14–34).

Soon after Paul’s visit a local church was established in Philippi. The church helped the apostle in different ways so this epistle was written to acknowledge their help, as well as to help them.

Philippians is personal and practical in its tone and teaching.

Paul emphasized the need for believers to rejoice in Christ.

“Joy” (chara) is used four times (Phil. 1:4, 25; 2:2; 4:1);

“rejoice” (chairō) occurs eight times (1:18 [twice]; 2:17–18; 3:1, 4:4 [twice], 10); and “glad” occurs thrice (2:17–18, 28). (In 1:26

the word “joy” is a different Gr. word; there it is the word “glad,” “boast,” or “glory,” [kauchēma], which also occurs in 2:16 and 3:3.) Paul wrote frequently in this epistle about the mind of a child of God. One’s manner of life is truly a reflection of what occupies his mind.

Robert P. Lightner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 646–647.

## **Explore:**

### **The Date of the Epistle**

Paul was in bondage when he wrote Philippians. But all do not agree which imprisonment he was experiencing when he wrote the book. Most believe he was in Rome at the time; some suggest he was in Caesarea; and a few argue for Ephesus.

The Scriptures give no clear indication of any imprisonment in Ephesus. As for Caesarea, Paul was confined there for two years, but imminent martyrdom is not suggested in the account which describes this confinement (Acts 23–24). His reference to the palace guard (Phil. 1:13) as well as his concern about facing possible death (vv. 20–26) argue for his writing from Rome. The date of the writing would then be a.d. 61 or 62.

Robert P. Lightner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 646–647.

### **Explore:**

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to

think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about AD 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

### **Explore:**

Paul, Epaphroditus, and many of the Philippians were experiencing troubles and challenges. In spite of those challenges, however, they could still know contentment and joy because of their relationship with Christ.

After calling for two women to settle their differences (verses 1-3), Paul gave four commands that lead to peace, regardless of circumstances. First, Christians should live in an attitude of joy because of their relationship with the Lord (verse 4). Paul exhorted the Philippian believers to rejoice or be glad in the Lord at all times, even when facing difficulty. The joy the Lord provides us is the strength we need to face a cruel world day after day. While there are many circumstances in which believers cannot be happy, they can remain joyful because of their relationship with Christ.

### **Believers Rejoice and Pray Instead of Worry**

#### **(Philippians 4:4-9)**

The next command was for believers to be gracious or reasonable toward others (verse 5). By definition, the term speaks of a forbearing spirit that does not retaliate, or of being gentle and considerate of others. We should be known for this

reasonable spirit and mindset in our treatment of others because the Lord's return draws near.

Then Paul appealed to his readers to allow no anxiety or worry to lodge in their hearts and minds. They could have such freedom if they would take all concerns to God in prayer, being always thankful to Him (verse 6). This was not a call to be carefree with no concern at all for the issues of life. Instead, it was a call to stop letting issues and concerns overwhelm and stress them. The antidote to this type of worry is prayer with an attitude of thanksgiving, trusting in God.

The last of Paul's appeals urged his readers to focus their thoughts on things that are morally excellent in God's sight and to follow the good example Paul had modeled for them.

Consider the terms used by the apostle in verse 8, each of which portrayed a mind filled with healthy and wholesome thoughts.

Things that are true are the opposite of that which is dishonest

and unreliable. Then, there are those things that are honest or honorable, things worthy of respect and dignity. That which is just or right is that which conforms to God's standards and not man's. Pure, by definition, refers to that which is wholesome or morally pure. Lovely portrays that which promotes peace and not conflict. Commendable relates to that which is essentially positive and constructive as opposed to things that are negative or destructive.

The last two terms seem to encapsulate the previous six.

Excellent was a word that portrayed virtue (see also 2 Peter 1:5).

The word praiseworthy implies that which would deserve men's praise. Thinking in this way would lead to inner peace not dependent on circumstances (verses 7 and 9).

For Paul, experiencing peace was directly tied to the things that occupy our minds. Consequently, when people's attitudes and thoughts are ungodly and unhealthy, there is a lack of peace.

When our thoughts are focused on that which is good and wholesome, peace will follow.

## **Explore:**

### **Believers Learn to Be Content in All Circumstances**

#### **(Philippians 4:10-20)**

In verse 10, Paul expressed gratitude for the gifts sent by the Philippian church to help meet his needs. Because they had not forgotten him and the spiritual impact he made on their lives, he could rejoice as they once again tangibly expressed their appreciation. Paul recognized that they had been concerned about his needs, but had not recently had an opportunity to demonstrate it. Their actions toward him demonstrated the selfless attitude Paul had been preaching and had demonstrated in his own life.

Paul did not want the believers to think he was overly focused on



his situation and the impending needs. In fact, he did not beg people for help, but merely presented the need and trusted God to meet it as He saw fit. He had learned that in whatever situation he found himself, he could remain content (verse 11).

By definition, to be content means to be self-sufficient, not dependent on circumstances. This self-sufficiency, however, did not come from himself, but instead came from Christ.

The apostle had lived through both plentiful and needy times (verse 12). He could look on either experience with contentment because of the strength and hope that Christ provided. Verse 13 is often misunderstood and misapplied. The *all things* he spoke of in this verse referred specifically to the abundance or need he had alluded to in verse 12. Paul knew he could handle poverty or abundance because of the strength Christ gave him. Christ enabled him to be at peace whether in need or enjoying plenty.

The idea of being strengthened by Christ was shown by a causative verb meaning to empower or put power into something or someone.

These verses address true contentment in the Christian life. Paul learned to be content regardless of the circumstances in which he found himself. Material needs and outward circumstances did not determine his sense of satisfaction and well-being in the Lord.

Many in our society never seem to be satisfied and are constantly looking for that which is newer and better. Further, their contentment is based mostly on their circumstances. For the believer, however, contentment is not dependent on newer or better. Nor is it dependent on life panning out as we hoped and expected. Instead, true contentment comes through Christ and the strength He offers.

Although Paul was content in whatever situation he found himself, he was grateful for the generosity and goodness of the Philippians as they partnered with him for ministry. By uniting with him, they also participated with him in his affliction, thus

taking it upon themselves and bearing it with him (verse 14).

The Philippians frequently contributed financially to support Paul's ministry. No other church had supported him early on when he left Macedonia (verse 15). At least twice they had sent gifts while he was nearby in Thessalonica (verse 16).

Thessalonica was a Macedonian port city on the Aegean Sea and was the next stop after Philippi on his second missionary journey. Paul was appreciative of their faithful support.

Yet, this grateful acknowledgement did not mean that Paul selfishly sought their gifts or money. He was interested in something far greater—to see fruit, in abundance, credited to their account with God (verse 17). The greatest value of their support was not financial but spiritual, and not to his benefit but to theirs, as their gifts enabled the apostle to continue ministering for Christ. Their partnership then would result in spiritual rewards to be received in the future—true spiritual

blessings for faithful service, not the financial gains promised by health and wealth false teachers.

Paul assured the Philippians that their support of his ministry was pleasing and acceptable to God (verse 18). Because of their faithfulness to support God's work, Paul prayerfully promised that the same God who had met his need would also meet their needs in Christ Jesus, in a manner and measure that are in accord with His own glorious wealth (verse 19). God sees the sacrifices His people make and will reward them accordingly, perhaps in this life, but certainly in the one to come. Verse 20 reflects the heart of Paul and these believers, expressing the praise and glory due to God both now and forever.

In the same way that God used the gifts of the Philippian congregation to further the gospel, so He uses our prayers and support today. We can find ways of partnering with pastors or missionaries who are taking the gospel to those who need to

hear and watch how God uses our gifts and prayers to reach the world with the gospel message.

### **Explore:**

Joy is a central theme in the book of Philippians. There are 15 references to some form of either the noun “joy” (chara in Greek) or the verb “rejoice” (chairō in Greek) in this short letter. The surprising situation is that Paul wrote this letter while under house arrest in Rome. In essence, his circumstances were not good, yet the theme of joy surfaces repeatedly.

- 1, Paul prayed for the Philippian believers with joy (chara) because of their partnership with him in the gospel. (1:4-5)
2. He rejoiced (chairō) that Christ was proclaimed—even when people did it with impure motives. (1:18)
3. He rejoiced (chairō) that his current hardship would turn out for his deliverance through the prayers of the believers and the help of the Spirit. (1:18-19)

4. Paul was convinced that the continuation of his ministry to the Philippians would contribute to their progress and joy (chara) in the faith. (1:25)
5. Paul had joy (chara) when the believers were unified. (2:2)
6. Paul would be glad (chairo) in his sacrifice for the sake of their faith, so that his ministry was not in vain. (2:17)
7. Paul would rejoice with (synchairo) the believers in his sacrifice for the sake of their faith, so that his ministry was not in vain (2:17)
8. Paul encouraged the Philippian believers to also be glad (chairete) in his life being poured out for them. (2:18)
9. Paul encouraged the Philippian believers to also rejoice with (synchairete) him in his life being poured out for them. (2:18)
10. Paul was eager to send Epaphroditus back to them, so they could rejoice (chairo) in seeing him again. (2:28)

11. Paul encouraged the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus back with joy (chara), since he had risked his life for the work of Christ. (2:29)

12. Paul had no problem with frequently repeating the reminder to rejoice (chairō) in the Lord, because he knew how important it is. (3:1)

13. Paul encouraged the Philippians to rejoice (chairō) in the Lord always. (4:4)

14. For added emphasis, Paul again commanded the Philippian believers to rejoice (chairō). (4:4)

15. The Philippians' renewed ability to support his ministry caused Paul to rejoice (chairō) in the Lord greatly. (4:10)

### **Explore:**

In seven of the thirteen letters there is an “associate writer,” as we might express Timothy’s role here. (The others are 1, 2 Cor., Col., 1, 2 Th., and Philem.) In five of those, Timothy has that

honor. I do not mean that Timothy helped dictate the letter or was, like Paul, inspired. Furthermore, in this letter Paul does not use “we” (as in some other letters), but “I” throughout.

Philippians is very personal.

Still, considering how sparingly Paul named others with him in these formal openings, the role means more than a mere co-worker present at the time and sending greetings. Paul had other ways of sending greetings from co-workers, usually at the end of his letters. Someone associated with him in the formal opening should be regarded, therefore, as one present at the time, especially interested in and known to the recipients of the letter, and probably one with whom Paul would have discussed the situation at the letter’s destination and what he was writing them. Indeed, he might even have sat in on the session (s) when the letter was dictated. (There is no reason to think he was the scribe; see Rom. 1:1 and 16:22.)



Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Book of Ephesians and Philippians,” in *Galatians through Colossians*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, First Edition., *The Randall House Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1988), 272.

**Explore:**

The anxiety of the Philippians for Paul’s welfare is understandable. His circumstances had changed. No longer was he allowed the relative freedom of living within his own hired house in Rome (Acts 28:16, 23, 30 f.). He had recently come to trial in connection with his appeal to Caesar and was currently in prison awaiting the verdict. The decision, once reached, was beyond appeal; he would either be released or sentenced to death (1:7, 13, 16, 19–26; 2:17). Paul was not deceived about the seriousness of the moment, nor was he unappreciative of his friends’ concern (cf. 4:14). Yet the appropriate response to

anxiety was—and remains—a quiet reliance upon God expressed through prayer (1:19; 4:6).

Paul has peace of mind, for behind the troubles that have befallen him he can discern the hand and purpose of God. His altered circumstances had actually served to advance the gospel (12). During the course of his trial it had become known to the whole praetorium guard (Caesar's elite troops) and to all associated with his case that his imprisonment was due to his bold witness for Christ, not for a criminal offense (13).

Moreover, as a direct result of his defense of the gospel, local believers were proclaiming Christ with greater boldness (14).

Their number included slaves and freedmen attached to the emperor's residence (4:22). In this turn of events Paul saw the affirmation of the principle he had expressed earlier in a Letter to Rome: 'In everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose' (Rom.

8:28). He knew from his experience that the Christian does not live ‘under the circumstances’ but above them!

Arthur E. Cundall et al., *Romans–Revelation, Daily Devotional Bible Commentary* (A. J. Holman Company, 2019), 261–262.

### **Explore:**

This profound thankfulness and love led to specific prayers for the Philippians, as it should for us. Christians shouldn’t just say, “You’re in our thoughts.” We should say, “You’re in our prayers” —and we should mean it! Paul certainly did. His deep, joyful contemplation of the Philippians prompted him to pray for some specific things, things that can only come from God.

First, he prayed that their love would continue to grow and would be characterized by “real knowledge and all discernment” (1:9). I like to picture love like a river. It needs to be guided by the banks of knowledge and discernment. Paul isn’t telling the Philippians to let their love blind them to truth and righteousness

so they end up overlooking sin and compromising holiness.

That's a false interpretation of "love" we often see in the world today. True Christian love is guided by the best interest of others. With true knowledge and discernment, love learns to spot the phony, the wrong, the evil. It learns to "approve the things that are excellent" (1:10). This love, guided by wisdom, will preserve believers in righteousness until "the day of Christ"—the Second Coming, when the Lord Jesus will reward them for faithfulness.

Second, Paul prayed that they would be filled with the "fruit of righteousness" (1:11). Don't confuse this with self-righteousness, personal piety, or self-motivated works. Paul is referring to the righteousness of Christ working in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit to produce fruit in our lives (see Gal. 5:22–23). The result of such good works empowered by God will be "the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11)—not our own praise and glory. Jesus said essentially the same thing: "Let your

light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

What a solid basis for abiding joy! When Paul scanned the ten-year life span of the body of Christ in Philippi, he had every reason to rejoice in confidence, as expressed in thanksgiving, prayer, and praise.

Charles R. Swindoll, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 9 of *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017), 20.

**Explore:**

**KEY TRUTHS:**

1. Believers Rejoice and Pray Instead of Worry.
2. Believers Learn to Be Content in All Circumstances.

**HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the**

**Bible:** In this section of his letter to the believers in Philippi, written around AD 62 while under house arrest in Rome, the apostle Paul taught his readers about the great value of pressing forward to know Christ better.

**Explore:**

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny

depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a

simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior  
(Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection  
(Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!



### **Question 1 of 5**

How does a child's relationship with his or her parents affect the way he or she relates to others throughout life? How does this affect society as a whole?

### **Question 2 of 5**

Why do you think many people are not content?

What role do circumstances play in whether or not we are content?

### **Question 3 of 5**

What does "stay true to" ("stand firm in") the Lord mean?

### **Question 4 of 5**

What are ways we can quarrel less?

### **Question 5 of 5**

How does entrusting ourselves into the hands of our loving God help us not be anxious?