

The logo features the word "JOY" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, the words "in PHILIPPIANS" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark blue background with a subtle, glowing pattern of light blue and white lines that resemble a stylized globe or a network of connections.

Joy Over Religion
Philippians 3:1-3
December 1, 2019

Billy Sunday:

"If you have no joy, then there is a leak in your Christianity somewhere."

Three truths Paul repeated to the Philippians:

I. Religion Damns

Philippians 3:1 (NKJV) Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Two things about joy:

1. Joy originates from inside the believer
2. Joy is a learned behavior

Takeaway:

When you rejoice in the Lord, your joy is a byproduct of a relationship with God.

II. Legalism Kills

Philippians 3:2 (NKJV) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Five signs of a legalist:

1. There is a lack of true joy
2. There is no real victory over sin
3. A critical, unloving attitude toward others

People who don't understand God's grace cannot extend grace to anyone else. This is why some Christians are hateful toward unbelievers. When you understand how much mercy God extended to forgive you, it's easy to show mercy to other people who don't deserve it! When you hear Christians using harsh language to condemn Muslims, atheists, liberals, or gay people, you have just identified a legalistic spirit.

4. An obsessive focus on outward standards of dress and behavior
5. Little or no assurance of salvation

A. Legalists devour the fellowship of a church

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs...

B. Legalists divide the fellowship of a church

Philippians 3:2b Beware of evil workers...

Romans 16:17 (NKJV) Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Takeaway:

It takes a very evil person with a wicked heart to want to divide the people of God. It takes a very wicked person to want to split a church. I would leave this church before I would intentionally hurt it. I don't understand any person who would want to divide a church family.

C. Legalists disrupt the fellowship of a church

Philippians 3:2c-3 (NKJV) ...beware of the mutilation. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Takeaway:

Some of the meanest people I have ever known were religious church members.

John MacArthur:

“Circumcision was a symbol; picturing man's need to be cleansed from sin at the deepest root of his being. The bloodshed involved in the physical act of circumcision could symbolize the need for a sacrifice to accomplish that cleansing.”

III. Flesh must be Denied

Philippians 3:3 (NKJV) For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Mark Twain:

“Having spent considerable time with good people, I can understand why Jesus liked to be with tax collectors and sinners.”