

REJOICE!

Joy in Relationships, Philippians 1:3-11

Remember the Good in People

Philippians 1:3 (KJV) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

[5] For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

- Paul is writing to the Philippian church from prison
- During his time in Philippi, Paul was illegally arrested, whipped, humiliated and thrown in prison
- He endured an earthquake in Philippi
- He was even run out of town
- Despite all the things that happened to him in Philippi, Paul *still chose* to remember and think good thoughts about the people of the Philippian church
- Paul thanked God every time he thought of the believers at Philippi
- All he had were the memories of the love, care and support he received from the Philippian church
- He chose not to focus on the painful memories only think about those things he could be grateful for
- Focusing on the things you are grateful for about others is not to deny or ignore that there have been hurts or problems in the past
- When you think about the people in your life, what comes to mind first?
- Their faults, weaknesses, how they disappointed or hurt you?
- Sometimes we allow the problems of the past to rob of us our joy today
- Or can you think of how they helped you, hung in there with you, etc.?
- They hung in there with you, when you were going your times of challenge, immaturity, and even pouting
- They found the good in you, now you need to remember and be grateful for the good in them
- Remember the *best*, forget the *rest*

Thank God for People in Prayer

[4] Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

- Paul made a commitment to pray for the people in his life
- Every time he prayed, Paul made a *specific* prayer request on behalf of the Philippian church
- It was Paul's *joy*, not a chore to pray for the people in the Philippian church
- In verses 9-11, we can see how Paul specifically prayed for the people in the Philippian church

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- Paul prayed for the Philippians:
 - that they would abound in love
 - That they would abound in knowledge and judgment
 - That they are sincere and blameless
 - That they will not be an offence to others
 - That they are filled with fruits of righteousness
- Praying for others gave Paul joy despite the difficult circumstances of his life

People Are a Work in Progress

[6] Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

- To find joy in your relationships you must realize that we are all a work in progress
- We all develop and progress at different rates
- Some people have growth spurts; others their growth is slow; but there is growth nonetheless
- Life is a matter of growth
- Even the Christian life is a matter of growth ***John 1:12 (KJV) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:***
- To find the joy in our relationships, you must enjoy them *in the process*, not only when they have "arrived"
- Paul says there has never been a doubt in his mind that God had started a *good work* in the Philippians
 - Salvation is just the beginning of a new life in Christ
- Paul had faith that God was going to finish His work in them
- He also believed that God *finishes* what He *starts*
- In relationships (i.e. spouses, children, co-workers, etc.), we must appreciate how far others have *come* and not focus on how far they have yet "to go"
 - Remind yourself God is not finished with them and God is not finished with you

Love People from Your Heart

[7] Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. [8] For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- Paul had the people of the church at Philippi in his heart
- They were not only on his mind; they were in his heart

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- The affection they had for each other was so real and tender, they felt what the other was going through
- His imprisonment for the sake of the gospel
- The church was suffering for the gospel just as Paul was
- The affection between Paul and the Philippians was so tender that their hearts went out to each other
- It's hard to get on each other's nerves when you are so much in each other's hearts
- When you love from the heart, you learn how to understand
- You learn how to understand by asking questions and listening
- You even learn how to love and understand people even when they are unlovable
- How do I do that?
- By loving them in the "bowels" or *affection* of Jesus Christ
- It is an intensive love it makes you love the unlovely
- But this love is not from you, it's the love of Jesus Himself
- The love or affection of Jesus Christ is supernatural
- Human love is only in our *head*, not our *heart*
- Our love gets tired, has limits, and wears out over time
- The love of Jesus is the *only* love that lasts
- The love of Jesus lasts through circumstances, trials and tough times
- This love can't be produced by us, it's a product of the Holy Spirit
Romans 5:5 (KJV) "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
- The Holy Spirit grows and mature the love of God in us
- The more we grow in grace, the more loving we should be
- Paul enjoyed and loved the people God placed in His life
- We must become like Paul and learn to enjoy the people God has placed in and around our lives
- The key to enjoying the people in your life is being filled with God's love