

COUNTERFEITS

Real Joy

Philippians 4:4-13

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Philippians 4:4-5 (KJV) Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. [5] Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

- Apostle Paul is in prison, chained to a Roman guard, for a crime he didn't commit
- Paul writes to the Philippian church that was being severely persecuted and commands them to ***Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.***
- How is this possible?
- Joy is possible in difficult situations depending on who *supplies* the joy
- Joy is something we can't produce ourselves, joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit
- We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord *always*
- Too often, we try to "manufacture joy" by doing things, going places or possessing things to give the appearance of joy, but it's really "counterfeit joy"
- Christians should be known as joyful people and such joy does not come from our circumstances, possessions, or having a positive attitudes about life
- Joy reigns in our hearts only when Christ is Lord of our lives
- Your life is going to have peaks and valleys, good days and bad days, but the quality of your day should not affect your joy
- Not only should you be joyous at all times, those around you should see your joy in your gentle, kind, unselfish spirit
- It lets the world know you are a child of God
- And you live that way because the Lord is at hand
- Real joy is found in God alone

Rejoice in the Lord's Peace

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

- Apostle Paul says "be careful for nothing", don't worry, be anxious or stressed about anything
- Joy is the *replacement* for anxiety, worry, and stress in life
- Prayer is the answer for anxiety, worry, and stress
- Anxiety or worry doesn't accomplish anything, but prayer does ***James 5:16 (KJV) "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."***
- Jesus warned against worry which demonstrates a lack of trust in God ***Matthew 6:30 (NLT) 30 And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?***
- *Prayer* – prayer here relates to regular times of prayer, devotion and worship to God
- *Supplication* – prayer that focuses on special needs, prayer where you pour our your heart to God

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- *Thanksgiving* – you appreciate God all that He is doing in your life and in this situation and you thank Him in advance for your answer
- *Requests* - are specific, definite requests; our praying is NOT general but specific
- Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything, no matter how small or insignificant
- Through prayer God is giving us peace to walk through and conquer any problem, trial, temptation, and the worry/stress associated with it
- Through the peace of God, we will have the assurance, confidence, and knowledge that God will provide, protect, deliver, guide, strengthen sustain, save, encourage, give life now and forever
- The peace of God comes from prayer involving both asking God for earthly needs and thanking God for His presence and provision
- The peace of God:
- It isn't that God's peace is impossible to understand, but that it is beyond our ability understand and to explain - therefore it must be **experienced**.
- When people seem to "lose" their heart or mind, it often is connected to an absence of the peace of God in their life.
- The peace of God then does not act as a **guard** for their **hearts and minds**.

- To experience God's peace, we must pray and we must also change our thoughts
- If our minds focused on the things of this world and the flesh, our actions are going to base on those thoughts
- That kind of thinking leads to worry and restlessness
- When we accepted Jesus, our mind was renewed by the Spirit of God **Romans 12:2 (KJV)**
² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
- We must change our thinking to whatever is:
- Think on these things; meditate, concentrate, focus on these things
- We must make a conscious choice about what we allow in our minds
- How do we change our thinking? By pouring in the word of God every day
- The word of God will serve as a monitor for wrong thinking **Psalms 119:165 (KJV)** ¹⁶⁵ **Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (I.e., make them stumble)**
- The peace of God comes with practice; how we live on a regular basis
- Paul is saying he has lived as example before the Philippians
- Paul is saying to the Philippians all that that they have learned, received, heard and saw personally in his life, they are to put into practice
- It's not enough to know godly living leads to peace, eliminates worry, anxiety gives us joy and pleases God; we must live it!
- Keep doing what you learned and received
- When we live this way the "God of peace" will be with us
- No worries or anxiety, just rest in the presence of God!

Joy in Contentment

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Philippians 4:4-13

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

- When Paul wrote Philippians he was under house arrest and chained day and night to a guard
- But he was *still* doing ministry behind prison bars
- The Philippians church heard about Paul's situation and how he was committed to preaching the gospel in spite of being in prison
- The church was moved to take up an offering to help meet Paul's needs
- But Paul does not allow his personal problems keep him from being appreciative and grateful for the help he's received
- *A counterfeit that we often fall for is allowing our circumstances to determine our level of joy*
- Paul was able to see past his problems and see how God was using people to be a blessing to him
- Paul did not focus on what was happening *to* him, but he focused on what he saw God doing *thorough others* for the sake of his ministry
- Paul is in prison, but he still has time to write a thank you letter to people who have supported him financially
- You and I like Paul go through all sorts of ups and downs in life
- But unlike Paul, we sometimes only see our "circumstance" and miss what God is doing *in* our circumstance
- Paul was able to find joy and be content in a situation he could not change and still be grateful to God and to the Philippian church God was using to encourage him
- Paul said in verse 11, right now I really don't need anything because whatever state I'm in, I've learned to be content
- *Contentment* is being satisfied to the point where you are not disturbed or upset with where you are or what you have in life
- Contentment is a *learned* behavior
- Paul learned how to be content with his station in life
- Paul did not become content overnight
- ***Paul learned contentment through faithfully believing that God would provide what he needed***
- Contentment is learning to be satisfied and happy right where you are
- If you are not content in your current circumstances, you won't be happy in *any other* circumstance either
- Paul said I *know how* to be *abased* and I *know how* to *abound*
- *Another counterfeit is possessions, we think having a certain thing will bring us joy*
- Only God can provide real, true, lasting joy
- Contentment can handle the extremes in life
- Paul focused on what he was supposed to *do*, not what he felt he should *have*
- Paul had *detached* himself from the "non-essentials" so that he could concentrate on the eternal

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- Contentment is also learning to accept what God may not change and asking God how you can use the difficulty to glorify Him
- Paul had learned how to be satisfied with what God was doing in his life and making the best out of what God providing in his life
- Paul proves to us you can have real, genuine joy with a lot or little; and be content
- The secret to contentment is not more things, it is *knowing* that Jesus Christ gives us the strength we need to do whatever He wants us to do
- No matter the situation you face, Jesus will supply *enough* of whatever you need to do whatever is needed at that moment
- Paul prayed that a physical problem in his body be removed and God responded by saying **2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (KJV) 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**
- Your need will teach you to trust God more
- God gives me enough strength to appreciate where I am and what I have
- Contentment is found in knowing God will take care of you **Philippians 4:19 (KJV) 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**
- We can trust that God will always meet our needs
- We must remember, however, the difference between our *wants* and our *needs*
- By trusting in Christ, our “attitudes and appetites” can change from wanting everything to accepting His provision and power to live for Him.
- Contentment is found in meditating on the Word
- We can find joy in contentment because we can do all things through Christ that gives us strength
- Jesus gives you the strength when you need yours is no longer sufficient
- You can have real joy because Christ is with you and **in you**