

**Part 2: Joy Beyond Ourselves**

**Big Idea**

As we take this journey afforded us by the loving instruction in faith offered to the church at Philippi by the imprisoned apostle Paul, we first learned that joy is discovered in Christ, and experienced when we become conscious of what he is doing “in” us, rather than searching for it in what is happening “to” us. So, joy is experienced within us, but joy is expressed outside of us, or when the focus of our lives begins to be “beyond ourselves.” In short, we will never be full of joy until we first look within, celebrate what God is doing there, and express it in the form of service to those around us.

*“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.” - Philippians 2:1-2*

**Jesus First** – Jesus needs to be our source. Let’s rejoice in all that Christ has done and is doing in our lives. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you surrender every area of your life to Jesus’ rule and reign. Seek to imitate Jesus’ servant heartedness and humility.

**Others Second** – As God’s family, the Church, let’s be united and love one another. Let’s also love others in the world around us. Seek to bless others and take a genuine interest in their lives, putting their needs above your own.

**Yourself Last** – Recognise that actually putting ourselves first does not bring true joy. Pre-occupation with ourselves is a ‘JOY KILLER’. Come before God daily in repentance for acting in selfish ways or not putting others needs above your own. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you die to your own selfish ambitions and to find joy in putting others above yourself. God exalts the humble and as we show humility we will shine like stars in our dark world and be beautiful outposts of Heaven.

**Discussion Questions /Application**

* Rejoice in all that Jesus has done for you and all He is currently doing in your life. (Spend some time in thanksgiving – encourage every member of the life group to give thanks to God for something).

1. Can you think of a time when you experienced Joy from God in difficult circumstances?
2. What do you consider your joy killers to be? What practical steps can you take to increase joy in your life?
3. How can we love each other better in our Church family?
4. How can you show more humility and servant heartedness in your everyday life?

**Prayer Focus**

Philippians 2:13 says, “for it is God who works in you to will (desire) and to act (ability) according to his good purpose.” God’s good purpose is for us to express the joy he has made available to us in Christ to others who need to know him too. Pray for both the desire and the ability to act on his good purpose, demonstrating joy to everyone.

**Leader Tips**

Share a personal story about an overwhelming problem in your life that became smaller when you became focused on the needs of others. 