

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

The High Five Book of Joy

Overview: Ron, I know it is March Madness time but what the heck does a HIGH FIVE have to do with Paul's wisdom-filled book of Philippians? Well, let me ask you this. When you think of two athletes, two friends, two businessmen or even better yet, two family members giving each other a HIGH FIVE, don't you think of PURE JOY? I would submit that of all the takeaways of Philippians the JOY of following JESUS is certainly worthy of a HIGH FIVE from all of us. Paul's letter/book is a powerful and useful guide for us to live a JOYFUL life even in the challenges of life. Let's look at five messages that we can embrace and apply if we choose to follow Jesus.

NOTE: To possibly help prove my point, Paul uses the word "JOY" 17 times in the book of Philippians. All verses taken from The Message translation.

Video: Bible Project – Philippians: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE9qqW1-BkU>

Segment Questions: HIGH FIVE TAKEAWAYS

1. Philippians 1: 1-14 – **THE JOY OF PRAYING** – Paul begins the book by stating that the first action of our day should not necessarily be focused on an activity or on our success but should be focused on the hearts of the people involved in any endeavor.
 - What is it about Paul's unique perspective on prayer that interests you?
 - What impresses you most about Paul's JOYFUL spirit? Can you recall a challenging event or outcome in your life that you purposefully chose to be JOYFUL despite the storm you were in? If not, have you witnessed someone else choosing JOY in a significant life challenge?
 - Paul says the Philippians are his partners in the gospel. What might he mean by that?
 - Why might Paul's graciousness and love for the Philippians seem unusual?
2. Philippians 1: 12 – 30 – **THE JOY IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAINS**
 - How do you think the Philippians felt regarding Paul's imprisonment (think about if your pastor, small group leader, etc. was in prison for sticking up for the gospel)?
 - What impresses you most about Paul's feeling about the "the gospel advancing?" Can you think of a situation when you placed your faith in Christ ahead of personal comfort and possible popularity or success?
 - What does he mean by "to live is Christ, to die is gain?" Philippians 1: 21
3. Philippians 2: 1 – 8 – **THE JOY OF GOD IN US (READ)**
 - Why is it so important to Paul that our attitudes match our actions?
 - Can you think of someone who proclaimed themselves to be a Christian whose walk was so contrary to their talk that it might have taught or influenced you right or wrong?
4. Philippians 2: 20 – 24 – **THE JOY OF GENUINE CHRISTIANITY (READ)**
 - What does it look like in your life to truly rejoice in the Lord like Timothy did?
5. Philippians 4: 12 – 14 – **THE JOY OF CONTENTMENT (READ)**
 - What is Paul's secret to contentment and strength?

Action Question:

With the above discussed study of the joy-filled book of Philippians, what are a couple of takeaways that you are committed to focusing on starting NOW?

Closing Personal Prayer:

Lord, thank you for Paul, his life, his testimony and, most of all, that he showed and shared the true joy of following you. Please engulf my heart, Lord, so all I see and feel is your love and path for us. Amen.

INTRODUCTION:

Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis, as he did with Galatians and Colossians. Instead, he wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry (2 Corinthians 8: 11; Philippians 4: 15 -18). Paul's affection for these people is clear throughout the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity (1: 3 -5, 25 – 26; 4: 1).

Philippians 1: 3-6 | Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present.

Philippians 1: 12-14 | I want to report to you, friends, that my imprisonment here has had the opposite of its intended effect. Instead of being squelched, the Message has actually prospered. All the soldiers here, and everyone else, too, found out that I'm in jail because of this Messiah. That piqued their curiosity, and now they've learned all about him. Not only that, but most of the followers of Jesus here have become far more sure of themselves in the faith than ever, speaking out fearlessly about God, about the Messiah.

Philippians 1: 21-23 | For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

Philippians 2: 1-4 | If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care – then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Philippians 2: 14-16 | Do everything readily and cheerfully – no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns. You'll be living proof that I didn't go to all this work for nothing.

Philippians 2: 20-23 | Oh, how that will do my heart good! I have no one quite like Timothy. He is loyal, and genuinely concerned for you. Most people around here are looking out for themselves with little concern for the things of Jesus. But you know yourselves that Timothy's the real thing.

Philippians 4: 12-14 | Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.