

Dead Man Living (Philippians) – Part 4

Paul's history with the church at Philippi is recounted in **Acts 16**. He made repeat visits to the Christians there during his later missionary journeys, and a relationship was forged. Years later, when he was taken to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar (at the end of Acts), the Philippian church sent Epaphroditus to do what he could to help the Apostle. Unfortunately, Epaphroditus suffered a near-fatal illness during the time he was in Rome; after he recovered and brought news of the church to Paul, he returned to Philippi to deliver the Apostle's letter.

You've heard the death row expression "Dead Man Walking"? Well, Paul is a **DEAD MAN LIVING**. He is on the first century equivalent of Death Row at the end of the book of Acts, under house arrest in Rome, and knowing that his only hope of freedom lies in the hands of the despotic Emperor Nero. But you would never know it by the tone of his "prison epistles" (Philippians is the last of these letters to the churches – he writes some personal letters later.) In the middle of the worst circumstances, Paul is unmistakably HAPPY. Why? Because he has learned that **the WORST circumstances are often the BEST opportunities** for God and the gospel to work!

Chapter 1 – The secret of joy in spite of CIRCUMSTANCES is having a SINGLE MIND ("Christ first").

Chapter 2 – The secret of joy in spite of PEOPLE is having a SUBMISSIVE MIND ("others next").

Chapter 3 – The secret of joy in spite of OPPOSITION is having a SPIRITUAL MIND

Chapter 4 – The secret of joy in spite of WORRIES is having a SECURE MIND

Paul learned through his trials that joy is much different than happiness. Most people think, "If only I could ..." or "If only someone else would ..." then I could be happy! They have DESTINATION DISEASE.

So after people make drastic changes, walk away from marriages, quit decent jobs, switch careers, move across the country, build a new house, buy a new car, or get a great promotion, THEY STILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEMSELVES, SO THEY ARE STILL UNHAPPY!

Nowhere in the Bible does God advise us to pursue happiness – because happiness is not a Biblical concept! The word "happiness" is only used 22 times in the Bible (NT – 6X, OT – 16X), and it NEVER means what we have been conditioned to think! In the Bible, "happy" doesn't mean, "having everything go my way." It means, "blessed or favored by God."

Happiness is extremely vulnerable!

- Happiness wrapped up in people is insecure because people let us down.
- Happiness centered in possessions is unsure because material goods deteriorate and depreciate.
- Happiness based on health is unreliable because time takes its toll on all of us.
- Happiness grounded in social achievement is unpredictable because a new star eventually eclipses you!

Everything we build our happiness on eventually double-crosses us! That is why the world is full of cynical and discouraged people; this is why we live in an age of despair. People have tried everything to attain happiness, and it never lasts! Sinners are basically BORED! But in contrast to happiness, the Bible uses the words JOY, JOYFUL or REJOICE over 160 times. And it teaches us that joy only comes from the Spirit of God living within us!

Happiness is external	Joy is internal
Happiness is temporary	Joy is permanent
Happiness is based on chance	Joy is based on choice
Happiness is based on circumstances	Joy is based on Christ

v. 1 – "Therefore" – what's it there for? – stand fast because of the future hope mentioned in chapter 3

v. 1 – "stand fast" – Greek term describing a soldier standing at his post

v. 2 – two women, contending for their own opinions and bringing disunity

v. 3 – "yokefellow" – two oxen in a yoke, pulling the same load

v. 4 – REJOICE IN THE LORD! ("I'll keep saying it until you get it!")

v. 5 – "moderation" – "gentleness" (i.e. – mercy or leniency toward the faults and failures of others; also, refusing to retaliate when mistreated)

v. 6 – "be careful for nothing" – "DON'T WORRY!" / "careful" – "to be pulled in different directions" (i.e. our hopes pull us one way, our fears pull us the other way, and we are pulled apart!) / old English word means "to strangle"

Don't worry about ANYTHING, but pray about EVERYTHING!

From the spiritual point of view, worry is WRONG THINKING (the mind) and WRONG FEELING (the heart) about circumstances, people or things – and it eventually even affects your body! Worry is the greatest thief of joy! And worry is a SIN! But the antidote to worry is the SECURE MIND.

v. 7 – “keep” – “garrison, guard like a soldier” – when you have a secure mind, the PEACE OF GOD guards you (v. 7) and the GOD OF PEACE guides you (v. 9) – with that kind of protection, why worry?!

v. 8 – we need to think about the **right things** to have a SECURE MIND

One study indicated that only 8% of the things people worried about were even legitimate matters of concern! The other 92% were either imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which they had no control.

WHENEVER WE BELIEVE A LIE, SATAN GAINS A FOOTHOLD!

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Ephesians 4:27 Neither give **place** (“a foothold”) to the devil.

v. 10 – the Philippian church wanted to help Paul, but had no opportunity

Paul was not a VICTIM of circumstances, he was a VICTOR in them!

- v. 11 – “I can accept all things”
- v. 13 – “I can do all things”
- v. 18 – “I have all things”

v. 11 – “content” actually means “contained” – we would say “self-sufficient,” having resources within so we do not have to depend on things without

CONTENTMENT is not COMPLACENCY, it is CONFIDENCE in God!

v. 12 – abased / abound – we need to know how to handle ADVERSITY, but we also need to know how to handle PROSPERITY

v. 13 – “I can have strength through Christ who puts power in me!”

v. 14-16 – Paul thanks them again for their help throughout his ministry

v. 17 – “fruit” – “profit” – they were storing up treasure in Heaven!

v. 18-19 – “You met MY need, and God is going to meet YOUR need. You met ONE need that I have, but my God will meet ALL of your needs. You gave out of your POVERTY, but God will supply your needs out of His RICHES in glory!”

v. 22 – If there could be a church in Caesar’s palace what can happen here?