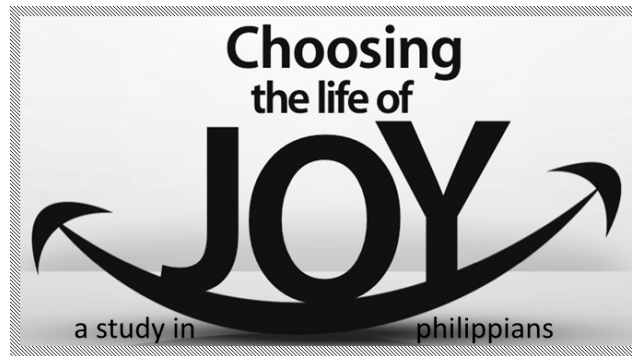


# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 19, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## **CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY** **A Study in Philippians** **“Getting Down the Basics”** *Introduction*

I know of no greater need today than the need for joy. Unexplainable, contagious, outrageous joy. Dr. Charles Swindoll says, “When that kind of joy comes aboard our ship of life, it brings good things with it... like enthusiasm for life, a determination to hang in there, and a strong desire to be of encouragement to others. Such qualities make our voyage bearable when we hit the open seas and encounter high waves of hardship that tend to demoralize and paralyze.”

### **3 Things Joy Does for us According to Dr. Charles Swindoll:**

- 1. Creates an enthusiasm for life**
- 2. Builds a strong determination to hang in there**
- 3. Gives one a strong desire to be of encouragement to others**

There is nothing better than a joyful attitude when we face the challenges life throws at us. Someone once asked Mother Teresa what the job description was for anyone who might work alongside her in the grimy and excessively needy streets and narrow alleys of Calcutta. Without hesitation she mentioned only two things: (1) the desire to work hard, and (2) a joyful attitude. It has been my observation that both of those qualities are difficult to find, but compared to an attitude of genuine joy, hard work is commonplace.

Joy! As much as we want to experience it and have its presence in our lives it is strangely missing from the lives of so many today. Just look around. Bad news, long faces, and heavy

hearts are everywhere... even in our churches and in the lives of believers (especially in the lives of believers). Much of today's popular music across the genres, when many consider a voice for the nation's conscience, promotes misery, sorrow and despair. If sex and violence are not the pulsating themes of a new film or tv series, some expression of unhappiness is. Newspapers and news programs and social media thrive on tragedies and calamities, lost jobs and horrible accidents, political unrest and scandal. Even the weather reports give their primary attention to hyping storms, droughts, and catastrophic events. Tomorrow is usually "hot, hotter, or hottest in history with dangerously high heat index and extreme drought" or "catastrophic rain events with flash flooding." It's never "mostly clear with an 80% percent chance of joyful sunshine." No! That doesn't sell in our overly dramatic "woe is me" climate. If we do find "joy and laughter" on the tv, either it is a recorded laugh track on some cheesy sitcom or a stand-up comic that is too vulgar to listen to.

And here is what is most tragic to me... this long-faced, heavy-hearted, glum attitude has invaded the ranks of the church and Christianity. Visit many congregations today and search for signs of happiness, sounds of laughter, contagious joy and you often come away disappointed... feeling a coldness, a stiffness. One preacher called "joy" **"the gigantic secret of the Christian."** It is often conspicuous and noticeably missing from many church, and sadly from the lives of many Christians. I actually find that simply inexcusable! The one place on earth where life's burden should be lighter, where faces should reflect genuine enthusiasm and hope, and where attitudes should be uplifting and positive is the church... the place where God's presence is among His people, where good news is preached and hope expounded. It seems today it's missing! How do we remedy this problem? How do we begin to reflect more the joy of the Lord rather than the doom and gloom of the world? How do we once again make our houses of worship and churches joy-filled places... with an infectious "joy" in the Lord that can't be denied by all who enter there? And how do we begin ourselves to really experience this joy in our everyday, all-kinds-of-circumstances life? That's what this study is about... **"Choosing the Life of Joy"** through the New Testament book of Philippians.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENC BETWEEN JOY AND HAPPINESS?**

Are joy and happiness the same thing? How are they different? How does the Bible delineate the differences between joy and happiness or does it? I think most people would agree that happiness is a goal. What about joy? Doesn't everyone want to be happy? What is the difference between joy and happiness in the Bible?

#### **6 Difference Between Joy and Happiness:**

- 1. The truth is the Bible never promises happiness, however it does promise joy** - There is a difference.
- 2. You can have joy and be happy but you can't really be happy without joy... at least lasting happiness** - It's easy to be happy when you have freedom from suffering, you're financially secure, and all your relationships are good, but then you have trouble with one or more of these, what happens to the "happiness?" It's probably gone but if you've trusted in Jesus and know you are secure in His hands (John 10:28-29) you've still got joy.
- 3. Happiness is based upon "happenings," joy is not** - Meaning if things happen to go well, you're happy, but if it happens that something bad occurs then you're happiness is likely gone. Not so with joy. As I said before, you can be happy and have joy but happiness is

dependent upon circumstances; joy is not. Here's why. Before Jesus went to Calvary He said *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11). You will have *"sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you"* (John 16:22). Jesus promises the disciples that their joy will be full or complete. Filling a glass of water to the brim makes it full or complete. Jesus went to the cross to make sure that joy would be complete. Next, Jesus reassures them that no one's going to take their joy away. That is a permanent possession, not a fleeting moment like happiness is. Jesus says to them and He says to us, today you might *"be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy"* even though it is still today.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Let me give you an example... when I presided over a believer's funeral (like Gene Varley this Friday), sorrow and joy are felt at the same time. The departed believer was born again and we are joyful knowing where he was is, but we are all still sorrowful about losing him. Happiness is not much help under these circumstances but joy is! Those standing at his grave know they'll be seeing him again and that gives them great joy, a joy that no one can take from them. And even though mixed with grief, the joy remains.

John writes in John 16:11, *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* Hopefully I have established the fact that happiness and joy, though related on some level, is not the same thing. You can be in a state of happiness one moment and then dread the next. If something happens to go wrong, you lose nothing in heaven. You get bad news but your good news is better. You are happy one moment then sad the next but you can be joyful in that same moment.

4. **One is permanent while the other is fleeting** – In this context happiness is going to be fleeting, while there is permanence... a lastingness to joy. Even though joy and happiness have a lot in common, one thing that they don't have in common is one is permanent while the other is fleeting. The Permanence of Joy... we have joy because we've been saved. How amazing that we've been rescued from the wrath of God Who placed it on His Only Son. Paul rejoiced in this, writing *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"* (Rom 15:13). One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy (Gal 5:22). This joy doesn't depart when we shed tears. Paul shows that the two can co-exist, writing *"As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy"* (2 Tim 1:4). Apparently Paul ached to see Timothy again and wept over him with longing but still had joy. Even when we encounter trials, James tells us, *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds"* (James 1:2). Do you remember Jesus saying *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11)? Full is a way of seeing it as complete and that same completeness of joy is found in many places in the Bible like in Jesus' words, Paul's epistles, James, Peter, and the Apostle John too (2 Tim 1:4; 2 John 1:12).
5. **One is from God and one is from us** – Biblical "joy" that is permanent and in all circumstances comes from the Lord and a personal relationship with Him. He places it in us, and give it to us. It is even listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. And although it could be said that no one is really "happy" until they know the Lord, there are many temporary things from which people may get happiness... though fleeting. It can be

said that we can make our own “happiness,” yet what happens when something takes that thing (whatever it is) on which we have based our happiness away.

6. **One can come and go but the other will remain** – A one preacher put it, “If joy and happiness were friends, happiness would be the unfaithful one of the two.” What do you think I means? Happiness will betray you given the wrong or bad circumstances, but joy is in all things.

Jesus brings joy because we’ve been saved to eternal life but He also says *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”* (John 14:27) so *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me”* (John 14:1). Do you believe in God and trust in Jesus? Then you have nothing to be troubled about, nothing to fear, you have eternal life, and that should bring great joy and that ought to make you happy too

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT “JOY”?

Many refer to the book of Philippians as a “treatise on joy.” Dr. Warren Wiersbe calls Philippians, *“a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy.”* It is the book of joy. And that is the to be the focus of this Bible study on the book of Philippians. Perhaps a place to begin is to take a look at the subject of joy from a believers/Christian perspective. The book of Philippians is not the only place where “joy” and the call “joy” in the life of a believer is spoken of.

**Some Biblical Passage on Joy:** *\*pay close attention to the who, why and how... in what kind of circumstances our joy is tied*

Romans 5:1-5 - *<sup>1</sup>Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

2 Corinthians 7:4 - *<sup>4</sup>Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.*

Galatians 5:22-23 - *“<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

Colossians 1:24 - *<sup>24</sup>I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

James 1:2-4 - *<sup>2</sup>My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup>But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

1 Peter 1:6-9 - *<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup>receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

1 Peter 4:12-13 - <sup>12</sup> *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;* <sup>13</sup> *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

1 John 1:1-4 - <sup>1</sup> *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—* <sup>2</sup> *the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—* <sup>3</sup> *that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.* <sup>4</sup> *And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.*

Jude 1:24 - *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”*

**8 Sources of Joy:** *\*In a sermon on "Rejoice Always" (1 Thess. 5:16), John MacArthur listed eight sources of joy and then six thieves of joy. I've summarized them below.*

1. **The character of God** - It is my understanding of the character and nature of God that anchors my joy.
2. **Appreciation for the work of Jesus Christ** - My favorite definition of a Christian? Somebody who worships in the Spirit of God, rejoices in Christ Jesus and puts no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3)
3. **The ministry of the Holy Spirit** – How can I not rejoice when I know the Spirit of God is leading me to understand the truth?
4. **Spiritual blessings** - Paul tells the Ephesians that God gives us everything we need out of the abundance of His riches. There's only one reasonable response to that and that is joy, deep down joy.
5. **Divine providence** - Because God is a God of absolute sovereign providence, I rejoice because nothing is outside His plan.
6. **Answered prayer** - I rejoice that God answers prayer (John 16:24). That in itself is enough to keep the joy flowing.
7. **The truth of Scripture** - When the Word of Christ dwells in me richly, I end up speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody and rejoicing in my heart because of the truth (Col. 3:16)
8. **Christian fellowship** - I don't mind being around unconverted people, but I prefer to be with believers because there is a level of joy that I don't experience with non-believers (1 Thess. 3:9)

**6 Thieves of Joy:** *\*Dr. MacArthur says, "If you're not rejoicing, there are maybe some reasons."*

1. **You're not a Christian** - If there's no joy in a Christian's life that may be good evidence that that person is not a Christian, because this is a gift from God through Christ planted in the heart. There's a well of joy in the believer.
2. **Ignorance** – Ignorance can steal your joy. If you have an aberrant theology, no wonder you don't have any joy. Bad theology steals joy. If you believe you can lose your salvation, that will make you unhappy.
3. **False expectations** - will steal your joy. If you expect Jesus to make you always healthy, wealthy, and happy, these are false expectations and a deadly set up.



4. **Forgetfulness** - will steal your joy. It's really good to just remember and remember and remember and remember the history of God's goodness throughout redemptive history as well as throughout your life because it helps you draw from the well of joy.
5. **Self-absorption** - will steal your joy. If you start worrying about all the little things in life that aren't the way we want them that will steal your joy. Narcissistic self-centeredness and self-analysis, getting all caught up in trying to interpret every little thing in your life – that will steal it.
6. **Being ruled by your feelings** - will steal your joy. Instead let truth control you and your feelings.

Dr. John MacArthur says, "The joyful Christian thinks more of his Lord than his personal difficulties, more of his spiritual riches in Christ than his poverty on earth, and more of his glorious fulfillment in heaven than his present pain. Therein lies our joy." This is certainly true and reflected clearly in the New Testament book of Philippians

### WHAT IS THE BACK GROUND TO THIS NEW TESTAMENT BOOK OF JOY... PHILIPPIANS?

There once lived a man who became a Christian as an adult and left the security and popularity of his former career as an official religious leader to follow Christ. The persecution that became his companion throughout the remaining years of his life was just the beginning of his woes. Misunderstood, misrepresented, and maligned though he was, he pressed on joyfully. One top of all that, he suffered from a physical ailment so severe he called it a "thorn in my flesh" ... possibly an intense form of migraines or a severe eye disorder or some other infirmity of the flesh... whatever this physical impairment was debilitating, weakening, draining for him. By now, you know I am referring to Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul. Though not one to dwell on his own difficulties or ailments, the apostle Paul did take time to record a partial list of them in his second letter to his friends in Corinth in **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**. Compared to his first-century contemporaries he was... <sup>23</sup>... *in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.* <sup>24</sup>*From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.* <sup>25</sup>*Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;* <sup>26</sup>*in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;* <sup>27</sup>*in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—* <sup>28</sup>*besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."*

Although that was enough hardship for several people, Paul's journey got even more rugged as time passed. Finally he was arrested and placed under the constant guard of Roman soldiers to whom he was chained for two years. While he was allowed to remain "in his own rented quarters" (Acts 28:30), the restrictions must have been irksome to a man who had grown accustomed to traveling and to the freedom of setting his own agenda. Yet not once do we read of his losing patience and throwing a fit. On the contrary, he saw his circumstances as an opportunity to make Christ known as he made the best of his situation.

Interestingly, Paul wrote several letters during those years of house arrest, one of which was addressed to a group of Christians living in Philippi. It is an amazing letter, made even more

remarkable by its recurring theme... joy. Think of it! Written by a man who had known excruciating hardship and pain, living in a restricted setting chained to a Roman soldier, the letter to the Philippians resounds with joy! Attitudes of joy and contentment are woven through the tapestry of these 104 verses like threads of gold. Rather than wallowing in self-pity or calling on his friends to help him escape or at least find relief from these restrictions, Paul sent a surprisingly lighthearted message. And on top of all that, time and again he urges the Philippian Christians (and his readers... you and I) to be people of joy.

Let me show you how that same theme pops up throughout Philippians in each of the four chapters:

### **7 Joyful Passages in Philippians:**

1. **When Paul prayed for the Philippians, he smiled** – Philippians 1:3-4, *“<sup>3</sup>I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.”*
2. **When he compared staying on earth to leaving and going to be with Jesus, he was joyful** – Philippians 1:21-25, *“<sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup>But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I <sup>u</sup>cannot tell. <sup>23</sup>For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. <sup>24</sup>Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. <sup>25</sup>And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith.”*
3. **When he encouraged them to work together in harmony, his own joy intensified as he envisioned that happening** – Philippians 2:1-2, *“<sup>1</sup>Therefore if there is any <sup>u</sup>consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup>fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*
4. **When he mentioned sending a friend to them, he urged them to receive the man joyfully** – Philippians 2:25-29, *“<sup>25</sup>Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; <sup>26</sup>since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. <sup>27</sup>For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. <sup>29</sup>Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem.”*
5. **When He communicated the “core” of what he wanted them to hear from him, he was full of joy** - Philippians 3:1, *“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.”*
6. **When he was drawing his letter to a close, he returned to the same message of joy** – Philippians 4:4, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”*
7. **When Paul called to mind their concern for his welfare, the joy about which he writes is (in my opinion) one of the more upbeat passage in all of Scripture** – Philippians 4:10-19, *“<sup>10</sup>But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: <sup>12</sup>I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Christ who*

*strengthens me.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.<sup>15</sup> Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.<sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.<sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.<sup>18</sup> Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.<sup>19</sup> And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. “*

**Some Interesting and Important Facts About Philippians:** *\*these may be some things that set the book of Philippians apart from Paul’s other letters and writings*

1. **Philippians is the 50<sup>th</sup> book in the Bible, the 11<sup>th</sup> book in the New Testament, the 6<sup>th</sup> of 21 Epistle Books (Romans to Jude), and the 10<sup>th</sup> of Paul’s 13 books -**
2. **Philippians contains 4 chapters, 104 verses and 2,002 words -**
3. **Philippians is the most unusual of Paul’s letters. Instead of writing to correct doctrinal matters, he writes a “thank you” letter to the church at Philippi that had been so generous in supporting him over the years –** 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. Paul’s affection for these people is clear throughout the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity.
4. **Paul, Timothy, Luke and Silas first came to Philippi in A.D. 51, 11 years before he wrote the Book of Philippians –**
5. **The words “joy” and “rejoice” occurs some 16 times in the Book of Philippians.**
6. **Epaphroditus carried the letter of Philippians from Rome back to the church at Philippi**
7. **Paul’s “Macedonian Call” in Troas during Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey led him to his work in Philippi and the planting of the church there.**
8. **The letter of Philippians is one of four “prison epistles” (or letters), so titled because they were written by Paul while he was in prison in Rome –** The four “prison epistles” are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.
9. **Philippi was located in Macedonia, in northern Greece, on the continent of Europe –** So the “Macedonian Call” and the planting of this church in Philippi through Paul’s second missionary journey, and Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi are very significant because they represent the advancement of the gospel further west, into Europe and ultimately to the entire world through Europe. **The first converts on the continent of Europe were Lydia and her household, a demon possessed girl, and a Philippian jailer.**
10. **Paul actually visited Philippi again on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey –**

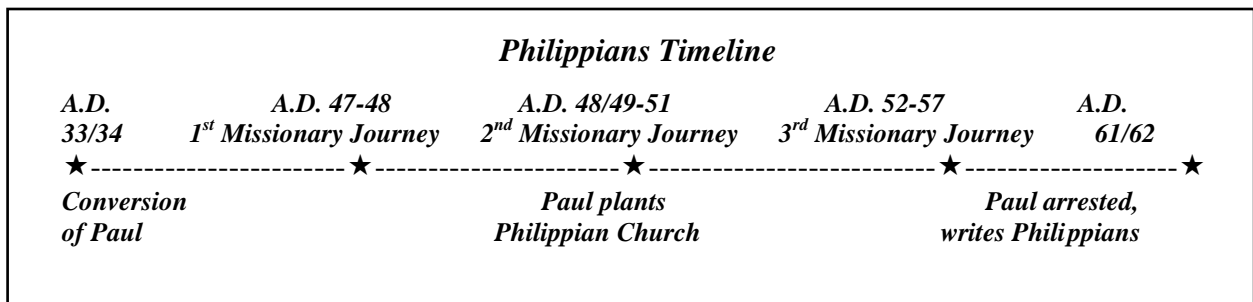
**Major Background Information for Philippians:**

1. **Author: The Apostle Paul -** The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison. He had been imprisoned for his faith. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul’s entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city



of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi ([Acts 16:8–12](#)). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul’s ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).

2. **Date: A.D. 61-62** - Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi ([Philippians 2:25](#); [4:18](#)). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).



3. **Theme:** – Paul encourages the Philippians to live as citizens of a heavenly city, growing in their commitment to serve God and one another with “joy,” a word that is mentioned in various forms no less than 16 times. Jesus is the supreme example of this way of life. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus try to be good examples as well of a life lived with joy and contentment despite overwhelming and dreadful circumstances.
4. **Purpose:** – He had several purposes in mind:
- (1) **To tell them that Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness**
  - (2) **To encourage them in their faith and joy in the Lord**
  - (3) **To assure them that he was still in good spirits and full of joy for them and the Lord**
  - (4) **To thank them for their continued support**
5. **Key Themes:** -
- (1) **Christians need to keep making spiritual progress (1:12, 25; 3:12–16).**
  - (2) **Such progress requires a proper spiritual outlook (1:5–11; 2:1–11; 3:7, 15; 4:7–9).**
  - (3) **Christ is the supreme example for the Christian. Mature Christians can also serve as role models (1:12–26; 2:5–11, 19–30; 3:3–17; 4:9).**
  - (4) **Suffering will come, but Christians can still be joyful (1:12–26; 2:14–15; 4:4, 11–13, 19).**
  - (5) **Prayer is crucial for maintaining a joyful Christian life (1:3–11; 4:5–7).**
  - (6) **Christians can enjoy rich relationships with one another; they can be united in service to promote the gospel (1:4, 7, 24–27; 2:1–4, 19–30; 4:2–4, 14).**

- (7) Keeping the law cannot provide a right standing with God; believers are saved only through their faith in Jesus Christ (3:2–10).**
- (8) Jesus is fully God and fully man. Because of his suffering on the cross, he is now glorified as Lord and Christ (2:5–11).**

### **HOW DO I APPLY THIS JOYFUL LETTER OF PHILIPPIANS**

Though we all have much to be thankful for, the pace and the pressure of life often squeeze the joy from us. Our shoulders slumped and our heads bowed, we find some days—or months—very difficult to get through. Desperate, we often search for joy in all kinds of ways—acquiring possessions, visiting places, or seeing people. But none of these can provide lasting joy. Where do you find joy in the midst of a trying circumstance?

- 1. Be reminded through Philippians that true joy come only through humble faith -**
- 2. Be reminded through Philippians that true joy come only through the saving work of Jesus Christ -**
- 3. Be reminded through Philippians that true joy comes only through joining ourselves in harmony with His followers -**
- 4. Be reminded through Philippians that true joy comes only through serving others in the name of Christ -**

This was the life experienced by the Philippian believers, and it is a life available to us today. Allow the joy you find in Christ to keep you from useless quarrels and divisions and to instead guide you into harmonious relationships with God's people.