



# Christ's Commission Fellowship

## Los Angeles

DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE  
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### REJOICING; NOT DEFEATED

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

*Philippians 2:1-4*

As we enjoy our Christ-likeness we will continue to rejoice in spite of our circumstances and we will not live a defeated Christian life.

What then is joy?

JOY is defined as to experience great pleasure or delight: REJOICE is defined as the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires. (Webster)

Another word for joy is DELIGHT. The psalmist says delight, enjoy yourselves in the Lord and what is His promise? He will give you the desires of your heart. God has already promised us that He will provide for all of our needs, and yet He tells us to delight in Him and He will give us even the desires of our hearts. The bible defines joy as blithesomeness or glee; exceeding gladness, joyfulness, mirth, pleasure, rejoicing, cheerfulness, calm delight.

Joy is not happiness. Happiness is often circumstantial – we feel happy because of something that happened to us. Joy, on the other hand, is a deep seated feeling that no matter what happens God is with you and that alone is a reason to rejoice. Happiness is based on happenings whereas joy is based on your relationship with Christ.

Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The only time we can experience true joy is when it from the Holy Spirit because the fruits of the Holy Spirit are by-products of our relationship with God. It is only when we decide to submit our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit that God can reproduce these fruits in our lives. That is why this is something we cannot manufacture on our own, we cannot fake it, we cannot even act it out. It comes as a result of our cooperation with the Holy Spirit to manifest His fruits in our life.

As Christians, we are not exempt from pain, trials or sufferings. Even when we are in our lowest, *Romans 8:18 says "the pain that you've been feeling can't compare to the joy that is coming"*. This is something we have to look forward to, to focus not on the pain or the trial but to what will come after the trial.

This is the test of true joy – happiness is usually gone once difficulty and hardship set in but true joy will remain. This is what draws the line between one who is in a personal relationship with Jesus and one who is not – a true Christian need not live a defeated life if Christ dwells in him.

Even James says in *James 1:2 "consider it pure joy my brother whenever you face trials of many kinds"*. This tells us that we will indeed have trials and tribulations in our lives but we have to find reassurance in Jesus' words in John 16:33 "take heart; I have overcome the world." Our hope, our joy, our victory should not be in who we are but rather it should be on who Christ is.

Because it is when we face trials, when we encounter hardships that our faith is tested. James goes on to say "*knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*"

Why does God allow trials? Because it is in these trials that God can mold us, it is during this time that He shapes us, reconfigures us so that we will become more and more like His Son, Jesus Christ. It is in this journey towards Christ-likeness that God will continue to chisel away all that is of us, so that we can become more like Him. God is going to do whatever it takes so that we can be conformed to His Son . . . so that we can become the masterpieces that we were meant to be.

This is where many Christians find it most difficult. Christianity is not an easy road, it is the narrow bumpy road that less travelers take. . . but the prize at the end of the road is worth more than we can ever deserve.

Look at what the apostle Paul is saying in Philippians, we are to make his joy complete by:

1. Being of the same mind. We are encouraged likewise to be of the same mind as Christ, to take upon us the same attitude of selfless sacrifice and humility.
2. To maintain the same love, which is *agape*, unconditional love . . . directed towards us which we should also direct towards other people who do not know Christ, but also the same unconditional love that should be directed to our brothers and sisters.
3. To be united in spirit -- are you doing things of your own power? Or are you doing things based on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit? Are you in God's agenda? Or your own personal agenda?
4. Be of one purpose. Our united purpose is evangelism and discipleship. We must like Paul press on towards the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. We must focus our attention on this one thing – evangelism coupled with discipleship so that we may excel. We must not be distracted with the many things that are around us, true not all of them may be bad but we must keep our eyes on the goal – the one purpose that we have been tasked with in Matthew 28: 18-20.

We have to have the same mind, the same love, the same spirit and the same one purpose. Psalm 133:1 says "*how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.*" Our one purpose should be – that we live out this life so that people can see Christ in me. So that through the life that Jesus lives in me, I will be able to bring others to His kingdom.

**Joy Robbers.** These are people, incidents and circumstances that the devil uses to rob us of our joy. They come unannounced that is why we should always be ready.

1. Sin – sin separates man from God. King David himself in Psalm 51:10-13 says that he asks to the joy of salvation be restored to him. This was after he committed sin when he took Bathsheba for his wife and he sent Uriah off to his death. If we cherish sin in our hearts, God cannot hear our prayers.
2. Sour Relationships – (Philippians 4:2-3) when we do not live in harmony, this can rob us of joy. We may be stuck in sour relationships – an unloving husband, a contentious wife, rebellious children, or you have parents that have embittered you. If you don't "feel" you Christianity, then maybe you still have an unresolved sour relationship. These need to be resolved in order for us to experience the joy of our salvation.
3. Selfishness – (Philippians 2:3-4) Paul is telling us to do nothing, absolutely nothing out of selfishness. . . or even to think of ourselves as higher or better than other people because in God's eyes we are all the same – sinners.

J- Jesus and His agenda  
O-Others  
Y-you

**The Antidote.**

***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Philippians 4:4***

It is written in the imperative mood, meaning this is a command. We are commanded to rejoice. Rejoice!-- This means to return to your source of joy, which is the Lord. The object of our joy should be Christ.

You may ask: what is there for me to rejoice about? Anything and everything. We should rejoice in all circumstances knowing that God is in full control.

The antidote is simple – obey God's command to rejoice. . . to return to the source of joy.

*"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil 2:5-11*

Our source of joy should be in Jesus and for what He has done. He was God and yet He did not cling to that position, instead He took the form of man. . . took the weight of our sins on His shoulders and paid the penalty of death. Jesus endured the pain and the shame so that we can share in the joy of an eternity with God.

We too must take this attitude – selfless sacrifice and humility.

## **WORKS:**

- 1. What is your personal definition of JOY?**
- 2. What are the things, people, events, situations that are robbing you of your joy?**
- 3. Are we willing to take the necessary steps in order to overcome these joy robbers?**
- 4. What is your antidote for joy?**
- 5. What does Philippians 2:5-11 mean to you personally?**