

Uncovering God's Secrets to Unspeakable Joy

**The Secret to Joy *in
Spite* of Your
Circumstances**

Text: Phil. 1:12-21

02/09/11



The secret to...

- ...joy in spite of your circumstances is a single mind.

What is Joy?

- Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that is based upon an indestructible kind of confidence.

Joy is not the...

- ...same as happiness.
Happiness depends upon what happens.
Happiness is subject to emotional highs and lows.

Joy defies circumstances

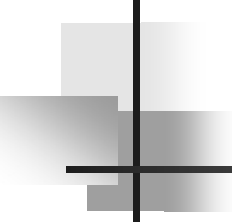
- It can coexist with doubt, ambiguity and pain. It is a contentedness beyond circumstances.

Robert Schuller

- *Joy is not the absence of suffering. It is the presence of God.*

What is a single mind?

- It is having one unified, unwavering, overriding purpose in life which directs your thoughts and actions.



Single-minded

- **22**“The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.
23“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!
- **24**“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:22-24)



Double-minded

- 5But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8*being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5-8)



The secret to...

- ...joy in spite of your circumstances is a single mind.

The word Christ...

- ...is mentioned eighteen times in the book of **Philippians** and the word **gospel** is mentioned six times.

Joy is Confidence

- You can experience joy in spite of your circumstances when you know that joy is a matter of confidence.

Philippians 1:6

- **“ For I am *confident* of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”**

Confidence is...



- **...an attitude, a state of mind that trumps our feelings.**

Joy is a *Choice*

- You can find joy in spite of your circumstances when you know that joy is a matter of choice.

Philippians 1:12

- **12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel**

Philippians 1:13

- 13 so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Philippians 1:14

- **14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.**

Observation

- Paul chose not to look at his circumstances and give in to anger and bitterness because bitterness spoils us.

The Path to Bitterness

- ***First Anger***
- ***Then anger unresolved leads to bitterness***
- ***Bitterness unresolved leads to resentment***

Instead...

- Paul chose to look beyond his circumstances to what God was accomplishing through his circumstances

In a Nutshell

- Contact with those that are lost
- Courage for those that are saved

What He Saw

- He saw that God used his imprisonment as an opportunity to share the gospel to people who would have been otherwise inaccessible

He Also Saw...

- ...that God used his attitude about imprisonment to encourage other believers to step up to their responsibility to share the gospel.

Their Conclusion

- If Paul could find joy in the midst of his circumstances and not lose his focus on Christ and the gospel, why couldn't they do the same.

Single-mindedness is...

- **...choosing to look beyond our circumstances and not giving in to bitterness that spoils us**

Philippians 1:15

- *15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;*

Philippians 1:16

- *16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;*

Philippians 1:17

- *17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment*

Philippians 1:18

- *18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,*

Observation

- Paul chose to look over the fact that some people were seeking to use his imprisonment for personal gain. He found joy in the result.

Explanation

- **Some ministers were preaching a pure gospel but with impure motives. They were competing with Paul and seeking to enhance their own standing in the community**

Paul's Focus

- As long as a pure gospel, which pointed to the true Christ is being preached, he did not care who got the credit. That is single-mindedness.

When we choose...

- ...to look beyond our circumstances and not give in to bitterness that spoils us, we will find blessings that surprise us.

Joy is in Christ

- You can joy in spite of your circumstances when you know that joy is in Christ.

Philippians 1:19

- *19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*

Single-Minded

- Paul is facing a trial and the certainty of execution, and yet he is able to look beyond even his impending death and find joy? How can he do it?

Paul is saying to us...

- ...I cannot control the facts but I can control my feelings. I cannot control what happens, but I can control my reaction

He knows with...

- ...absolute certainty that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. He is able to look beyond what this world may offer to eternity with the King.

Philippians 1:20

- *20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

Philippians 1:21

- ***21 “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”***

Paul's only concern...

- ...was what would give God glory. He wanted to live but he was ready to die. He could see the exaltation of Christ in his life and his death.

When we choose to...

- ...look beyond our circumstances and not give in to bitterness that spoils us, we will find blessings that surprise us and boldness that sustains us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- “What lies behind us and what lies before us pales in comparison to what lies within us.”

Translation

- In other words, no matter how bad our past has been and no matter how troublesome our future may be, we have the Spirit of God within us, and we can resist any joy stealers that come our way.