

“Joy”

Action Guide



The Hebrew word for “Happy” is ASHAR - which means to set right or to be blessed. So, for example when Leah and Rachel are trying to please Jacob by having children. Leah announces that God has noticed her predicament and has given her a child. She names the child Asher ***“Happy Am I for women have called me Happy”***.

The Greek word for Joy is CHARA - to be exceedingly glad. It really means to be exceedingly glad in the midst of very trying and difficult times. See James 1:2-4 to see joy in action.

The primary difference joy is used when people demonstrate happiness in the midst of trying times. The Chara is used when the angel announces “I bring you good news of GREAT JOY that will be for all the people”.

God brings us a message that will allow us to be exceedingly glad even when we are in the midst of very trying and difficult times. In the midst of all that can and is going wrong - God brings us a message of good news and GREAT JOY!

What might be our sources of joy when we are experiencing overwhelming challenges? Paul offers some thoughts on this in his letter to the Philippians. As you work your way through this short letter you will discover that Paul uses the word “joy” and “rejoice” interchangeably.



Read Philippians 1 - Paul is praying with “joy” for the Philippians. His source of joy is discovered through a partnership with the Christians in Philippi.

What was the common factor in the source of this partnership?

What partnerships have you experienced that would cause you to use “joy” as a description?

What are some of the challenges that Paul writes of that brought him joy?

Therefore, when we look closely at Philippians 1 we see that for Paul the sharing of the Gospel is a basic source of Christian joy. Sharing the Good News of Jesus is a source of joy, especially when experiencing very challenging and difficult situations.

Why do you suppose sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, might bring a Christian who is feeling overwhelmed by life’s challenges, a sense of joy?



Read Philippians 2 – Paul goes on and asks his partners to “make his joy complete” by joining him in imitating Christ.

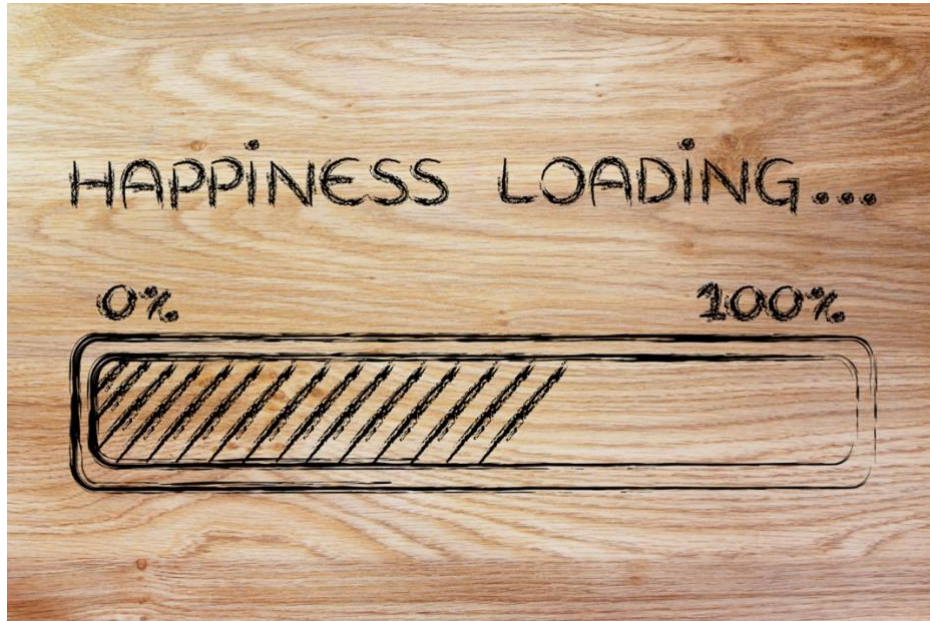
In what ways has “imitating Christ” brought you joy?

What are the characteristics that Paul wants his partners to imitate?

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In the midst of a future execution Paul states, “I am glad and rejoice with all of you (2:19), how does suffering as a servant on behalf of others cause you to rejoice or be filled with joy?

Therefore, Philippians 2 shows us that being able to serve others and seeing the how God is working in the lives of others through our willingness to imitate Christ our sources of joy.



Read Philippians 3 - In this section of Philippians, Paul does not necessarily use the word “joy” or rejoice. Paul, does however help us see that a source for joy cannot be “confidence in the flesh”.

In your own words describe “confidence in the flesh”

Many times when we use the word “happy” we are actually describing “confidence in the flesh” items. For example, I might say, “I was happy when I received the promotion. I was happy when the doctor told me the good news. I was happy when I discovered that I had an unopened bag of M&M’s.”

Happiness is certainly not a negative emotion and it is good to be happy, at least that is what the song says.

A difference between happiness and joy is I am expected to have joy even if I discover that the unopened bag of M&M’s was a prank by my children who had

actually eaten the M&M's and then stuffed the bag with rocks. In other words, joy, which is a more mature expression of happiness, cannot be found through "confidence in the flesh". Nonetheless I am neither happy or filled with joy when I discover my M&M's are gone 😊.

What are some "confidence in the flesh" items that bring you happiness?

Paul shares 3 sources for discovering joy.

Philippians 3:8 _____

Philippians 3:9 _____

Philippians 3:10 _____



Read Philippians 4 – It is here that we encounter those words of joy that inspire us to keep pressing on, “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, REJOICE.

Reframing those things that are creating anxious moments into prayers of thanksgiving will create a reason for joy according to Paul.

What are some thing that are creating anxious moments for you?

Create a space for joy by writing out a prayer of thanksgiving to God about the anxiety that you are currently experiencing. This is what Paul is describing in Philippians 4:8 by the way.
