

JOY, IN OUR GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11 // JORDAN COROS
FEBRUARY 9, 2020



“I experience great joy when I see that we are united in promise (v. 6), united in purpose (v. 7), united by love (v. 8-9), and united by change (v. 10-11).”

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Jordan explained that, “Joy is supernatural delight found in and founded on who God is and what he’s doing.” How does this definition help you distinguish joy from happiness? What difficulties do you see for Christians who don’t understand the differences?
- What are a few major details of the promise (Revelation 21:3-7) and purpose (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Peter 4:13) that unite believers together and give you a reason for joy?
- How do the opening verses of this letter show that having joy made a difference for the Apostle Paul while he was suffering? Without joy, what thoughts could have occupied the focus of his mind, emotions, and prayers while he was under arrest?
- In Hebrews 12:2 we read that Jesus endured the cross and despised its shame for the *joy that was set before him*. In other words, he saw the mission being accomplished through his suffering. Can you reframe any of your pain and suffering as part of God’s greater mission to bring good news of great joy to the world?
- Is your suffering still useful to God if you never proclaim to have faith in Jesus despite the pain and extreme difficulty?

- We can be united by love but we must love according to God's standard and not our own. Read about several qualities of God's love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Which of those qualities do you think God helps you reflect most easily? What actions would help you better exhibit a quality of God's love you are weak in?
- Going further toward unity in love, how does the love you offer other believers compare with what you read in 1 John 3:16-18? (Do these verses describe an expression of love you can demonstrate practically with believers in your small group, church, or neighbourhood?)
- Are you becoming like the kind of people described in Philippians 1:10-11? Is it possible to have joy in being united together with others if you resist being changed by God's work in your life?
- Perhaps you noted earlier that Paul looked at his imprisonment as an opportunity to further *confirm* and *defend* the gospel which he preached everywhere with boldness. It can be difficult for us to see our hardest trials from this same joy filled perspective but it's possible to do that with God's help. Romans 12:1-2 says we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. What would it mean for you to renew your thinking so that you can experience more joy through the most difficult situation you are likely to face this week?