“How to Keep Your Joy”
Philippians 3:1–11

Introduction

• Why is it that so many Christians lose their joy?

• They start off great.
  
  o They are so filled
    with enthusiasm and love.
  
  o When they first
    become Christians
    everything is fantastic.

• But as time goes by
  they seem to spring a leak
  and the joy drains out of them.

  o I meet too many Christians
    who are just mumbling through life.

  o I know
    there are a lot of things
    that will rob you of joy.

• So today I want us
  to look at
  what Paul has to say about
  “How to Keep Your Joy”.

Delivered by Dane Boyles Sunday AM 02/22/2009 to the Leander Church of Christ at Crystal Falls, Leander, Texas USA
• This is a recurring theme in the epistle to the Philippians.
  
  o Paul talks about joy  
      17 different times  
      in this letter alone.
  
  o He keeps returning to this point,  
      repeating himself.
  
  o This is a good teaching tool  
      he says in verse 1,

1 Finaly, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same thing to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. (Phil. 3:1)

• In this passage Paul gives us  
  three safeguards  
  on how to keep our joy.

I. RESIST LEGALISTIC ATTITUDES

A. Legalism is a kill-joy.

   1. It destroys the joy in your Christian life.

   2. It can ruin a family, people, churches.
B. Legalism is substituting rules and regulations for a relationship with Christ.

   1. It gets the focus off what God has done for you and puts the focus on what you have to do for God.

   2. When you flip the focus around like that, you’re going to lose your joy.

C. This has been a problem for thousands of years.

   1. In Philippians 3, Paul is attacking the legalizers, called Judaizers, who are trying to steal the joy of the Christians in Philippi.

   2. These were a group of people who said,

      “Yes, believe in Jesus Christ, trust Him with all your heart but there are also some other things you must add onto your faith.”
3. In essence, they were teaching “Christ plus works.”

   a. They said
      “you going to have to keep all the Jewish laws to be a Christian.”

   b. Do you remember Paul’s response?

   c. That’s verse 2-3,

\[
\begin{align*}
&2 \textit{Watch out for those who do evil, those dogs, men who insist on cutting the body.} \\
&3 \textit{We worship God by His Spirit, and rejoice in our life in Christ Jesus. We do not put any trust in external ceremonies. (Phil. 3:2-3)}
\end{align*}
\]

D. SAFEGUARD #1: Live each day by grace.

   1. Grace is the key and secret to joy.

      a. Realizing
         that everything God does
         \textbf{in you and through you}
         is by grace,
         rather than \textbf{working} for it & \textbf{earning} it.

E. Paul uses his life as an example.
1. Paul was a super legalist before he became a believer.

2. He had tried the rules and regulations way and they didn’t work.

4 Though I myself have reason for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reason to put confidence in the flesh, I have more.

5 Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. In regard to the law, a Pharisee.

6 As for zeal, persecuting the church. As for legalistic righteousness, flawless. (Phil. 3:4-6)

F. Paul, the former super legalist, gives five examples of how you know when you’re falling into the trap of legalism.

1. You begin to trust in rituals.

a. Paul says,

5 I was circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel (Phil 3:5).

b. We have our own rituals today.
c. Church attendance,
giving,
doing all the right things **just right.**

d. If you fall into this trap,
**trusting these for your salvation,**
you’re in real trouble.

2. Don’t trust in **race.**

*I was of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin.*
(Phil. 3:5)

a. Benjamin was the purest tribe.

b. Paul was named
   after the first king, Saul,
   who was a Benjaminite.

c. Paul says,
   “hey, I used to trust in my **heritage.”**

d. Have you ever heard anyone say,

   “**Daddy’s** a Christian…
   My **mom** was a believer…
   My **uncle** was a preacher.”

e. You can get religion by osmosis
   but you can’t get Christ by osmosis.
3. Don’t trust in religion.

5 I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. (Phil. 3:5)

a. Paul was a religious person.

b. But Jesus
   has nothing to do with religion,
   except that
   He’s 100% opposed to it.

c. Religion is humanity’s attempt
   to get to God.

   It’s works!

d. Jesus Christ
   is God’s attempt
   to get to humanity.

e. Religion is rule keeping.

f. Christianity is a relationship
   and that’s a huge difference.

4. Don’t trust rules.

5 In regard to the law, I was a Pharisee. (Phil. 3:5)

a. Paul kept all the rules punctiliously.
b. We think of the Pharisees as hypocrites but there were also genuine, sincere Pharisees.

c. They were the spiritually elite of that age.

d. They took the Ten Commandments and expanded them into 619 other decrees, statutes and commands.

e. And they were legalists!

f. A Pharisee would not even eat an egg if it were laid on the Sabbath, because that was considered work.

g. They were pros at rules and regulations.

5. **Don’t trust in reputation.**

6 *As for zeal and legalistic righteousness, I was faultless.* (Phil. 3:6)

a. Today we have people saying,

   “I’m a Christian because *I read the Bible, I go to church every time the doors are open.*”

b. That’s legalism.
c. The point is, there is nothing wrong with any of these things.

d. The problem is thinking that they give us points with God.

e. They don’t.

f. Salvation is by grace through faith!

II. **REEVALUATE YOUR ACTIVITIES**

A. A lot of people are looking for joy in all the wrong places.

1. People do this in a number of ways.

   a. First, sex, drugs and alcohol.

      (1) 1 in 4 single adults have an STD.

      (2) Drug and alcohol abuse in on the rise.

   b. Second, people become more resistant to God and more assured of their own intelligence (big bang theory, evolution).

   c. Third, people pursue religion instead of Jesus.
2. Here Paul compares the value of religion to the value of a relationship with Christ.

3. There is no comparison.

4. Paul had been a very religious person, but was lost.

B. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. (Phil. 3:7-8)

1. This is Paul’s profit and loss statement.

2. All the things he talked about he considered a complete loss, worthless.

3. Phillip’s translation reads this way:

8 I consider it all mere garbage compared to being able to win Christ… (Phil. 3:8)

C. SAFEGUARD #2: Keep your priorities in perspective.
D. Know what is important, what is profit and loss.

E. Don’t lose your joy over things that really don’t matter.

1. The number one reason people lose their joy is they misplace their priorities.

2. They get too involved in things that really aren’t that important.

3. They’re afraid that they’re going to have to give up something in order to become a Christian.

   a. And they’re right!

   b. When you come to Jesus Christ you give up everything you’ve got.

   c. Christianity is total commitment.

   d. What I received is worth more than everything I gave up.
4. You give up guilt and gain a clear conscience.
   
a. You give up worry & gain a power for living.
   
b. You give up frustration and lack of purpose in life and gain real meaning and value in life.
   
c. You give up going to hell and gain going to heaven.
   
d. You give up trying to solve all your problems by your own will power and gain having the resources of God to help solve your problems.
   
e. That’s a pretty good trade-off but you have to keep your priorities in perspective.

III. REFOCUS YOUR AMBITIONS

A. Lasting joy comes from knowing Christ better and better.

10 I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His suffering, becoming like Him in His death. (Phil. 3:10)
1. Paul says his number one goal in life is to know Christ better and better.

2. How well do you know Jesus Christ?

3. I know lot of Christians who have been Christians for 5, 10, or more years and they really don’t know Jesus Christ very well.

4. The word “know” in Hebrew is the word “yada”.

5. It means to know intimately, experientially.

B. SAFEGUARD #3: Get to know Christ better and better.

C. Never stop growing and developing your relationship with Christ.

   1. The moment you stop growing, you’re going to lose your joy.

D. How do you get to know the LORD in a personal way?

E. Three keys:

   1. Time.
a. Developing a relationship with someone doesn’t happen overnight.

b. Liz and I dated for 2 ½ years before we got married.

c. In the same way, it takes time to get to know God.

d. There are not shortcuts.

e. You can’t fake it.

f. Sit down with your Bible, read it, meditate on it.

g. David wrote,

97 Oh, how I love your law!
    I meditate on it all day long.
98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.
99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. (Psa. 119:97-99)

2. Talk.

a. Liz and I have been married 16 ½ years.

b. To stay close we have to talk.
c. If we don’t, we grow apart.

d. That’s why we have to talk to God.

e. We have to pray.

f. Relationships require communication.

g. There is a corollary here:

(1) Much prayer, much joy in your life.

(2) Little prayer, little joy.

(3) No prayer, no joy.

3. Trust.

a. Relationships are built on trust.

b. I trust Liz’s love for me.

(1) I trust she will never hurt me on purpose.

(2) I trust she will think of me first.

(3) I trust she will honor me.

c. That’s why we have to learn to trust the LORD.
d. He will allow all kinds of problems in our lives so we can learn that He is reliable all the time.

e. I didn’t learn this overnight.

f. That is learned through years of going through problems and seeing God pull me through it and work them out.

g. You learn to trust God throughout life.

Conclusion

How’s the joy in your life this morning?

If you’re feeling joyless, which one of the three kill-joys is the culprit?

Legalism?
Priorities?
Not trusting Christ?

A life without purpose is a killjoy.
Maybe you’ve tried everything else and not found happiness.

People are looking for joy in all the wrong places.

Joy comes from knowing Jesus.

It begins with a decision to say, “God, I want to know You.”

Set a goal in your life to get to know Jesus Christ.

**PRAY!**

**Gospel Invitation**
"How to Keep Your Joy"
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Introduction

Why is it that so many Christians lose their joy? They start off great. They are so filled with enthusiasm and love. When they first become a Christian everything is fantastic. But as time goes by they seem to spring a leak and the joy drains out of them. That’s why in this passage Paul gives us three safeguards on how to keep our joy.

IV. RESIST LEGALISTIC A___________ (Phil. 3:2-3)

• SAFEGUARD #1: Live each day by g___________ (Phil. 3:4-6).

• Paul gives five examples of how you know when you’re falling into the trap of legalism:

  6. You begin to trust in r________ (Phil 3:5).

  7. Don’t trust in r________ (Phil. 3:5).

  8. Don’t trust in r________ (Phil. 3:5)

  9. Don’t trust r__________ (Phil. 3:5).

  10. Don’t trust in r________ (Phil. 3:6).

V. REEVALUATE YOUR ________________ (Phil. 3:7-8)

• SAFEGUARD #2: Keep your p____________ in perspective.

VI. REFOCUS YOU’RE A___________ (Phil. 3:10)

• SAFEGUARD #3: Get to know __________ better and better.

• How do you get to know _______ in a p____________ way?

  4. T___________ (Psa. 119:97-99)

  5. T___________

  6. T___________

Conclusion