



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—How to Have Joy in the Dumps (Phil 1:12-26)

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Think of a bad experience that you have gone through. Have you seen good come out of it in your life? How about in relation to your life with God?
2. Have you ever been around someone that responded positively to problems in their life? How did that affect you, or others that you know?
3. Why is it so important to have God and His kingdom as your priority when your life is in the dumps? On a practical level, how can you re-orient yourself to this when life is difficult?
4. What did Paul mean that his deliverance would come "through your prayers and the Spirit"? How can you put yourself in a position to be helped this way when you're down?
5. Have you ever been able to say "for me to live is Christ"? Why or why not? Share with the group what it would take for you to get there.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

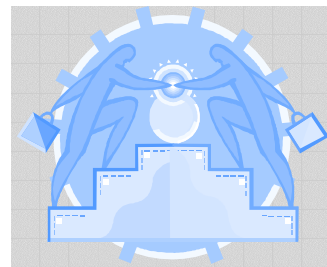
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -

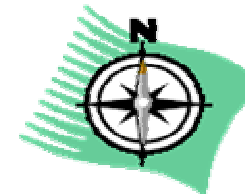
Rm104	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 104	Open—Hixson-Sturgill-Bower
Rm 112	Small Group Leaders Training	Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-40s—Sims-Fendley	Rm 201	20s—Jones-Norwood
Rm 202	Welcome Group—Hey-Lux	Rm 202	30s—Miller-Tripp
Rm 203	Young Singles—Franklin	Rm 203	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 204	Making Peace with Your Past	Rm 204	Blessings in Disguise
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 206		Rm 206	Engaged/Newly Married
Rm 207	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 207	20s—Alexy
Rm 208	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 208	Open—Regis-Hubbard-Anderson- Robertson
		Gym-3rd fl	College Ayres-Getchell-Hopkins

March 14, 2004

Enjoy the Rest of Your Life

Discover principles for happy living from the book of Philippians

Celebration Fellowship



Volume 2, Issue 32

March 14, 2004

Inside this issue:

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If Momma Ain't Happy...

A preview of Philippians 1:27-2:11

The old saying "if Momma ain't happy, there ain't nobody happy" illustrates how much we all enjoy getting along with one another. Few enjoy conflict, although it's everywhere; conversely, unity in our relationships is one of the major contributors to a joyful life. Paul talks about the need for unity in this week's study and, by exposing hindrances to it, reveals the underlying attitude that unity requires—humility. Jesus was the supreme example of this attitude, and Paul talks about Him in Phil 2:5-11, one of the

great biblical passages. This entire section shows how easy it is to get into conflict, even with those you love (often those are the ones we have the most conflict with). The Philippians were one of the healthiest churches in the New Testament, yet they had to be reminded of the necessity of unity several times. Sometimes conflict arose because of external problems (1:27-30), sometimes because of intruders intent on subverting the work of God (3:1-3), but sometimes the unity was threatened by internal issues—as seen in



The secret of happiness is found in Christ!

2:1-3, 2:14 and 4:1-3. Each time Paul's answer to conflict is clear: stand firm in unity (work hard for it), and do it with genuine humility and unselfishness. Armed with these weapons, joy is inevitable in relationships.

Enjoying Others' Success (Phil 1:12-26)

Like so many things in the Christian life, the pathway to joy is very different from what we normally think. We think joy comes through the fulfillment of our self-oriented goals. But the truth is that joy comes from fulfilling God's purpose in our lives, and a great part of this purpose is to help others succeed in their relationship with Him. When we help others fulfill God's purpose in their lives, the Kingdom of God and His purposes advance on this earth; when this is our goal we are on the true pathway to joy. This is what we see through the apostle Paul in this week's study. Even though he was imprisoned while awaiting trial before Nero for his faith in Christ, he was still enjoying life. The reason was clear—his chains had led to the progress of the gospel, and since this was his priority, he was a happy man. Because of his bondage, some, trying to support Paul, had taken up the slack and were preaching the gospel

in his place. Unfortunately others who preached were doing so out of jealous motives, and were trying to hurt Paul. He didn't really care because the gospel was being preached either way. He knew motive was important, but also that God would take care of that. What mattered was that Christianity was making inroads in the Roman empire because of Paul's imprisonment. The elite Praetorian Guard had come to know about Christianity (which had been an obscure sect of Judaism prior to this time), and many others had as well. In light of the many religions prevalent in the empire at the time, the very fact that Christianity was being noticed was significant. Also, the fact that Paul's situation was leading others to preach the gospel says a lot to us as well. Due to his positive response to his situation others were being encouraged, and the gospel was making progress. Because of our impact on others it is

very important that we keep a positive, faithful outlook on our circumstances. This commitment to the advancement of the gospel, and to others' success, will help us maintain a joyful outlook on life, no matter what happens. There are two normal reactions by others to us when we encounter difficulty, though. Some, wanting to support us, try to carry on our work and encourage us. Others, seizing an opportunity to "kick us while we're down", do what they can to make things worse for us. We must understand that they did the same to Paul (and to Jesus before him), so we must not take it personally. They are pursuing their own selfish agenda, and will be judged by God for this. The best thing we can do is to understand that God will bring good from their actions, and pray for them. Paul was able to "let it slide" because of this, but also because he fully expected to be re-

(Continued on page 2)

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Philippians 1:12-26 (continued from pg 1)

leased soon. The basis for his hope was twofold; first, failure to be released would mean that he had been found guilty of the charges the Jews had brought against him, and that would be shameful—and God would not allow this. Secondly, once he was declared innocent he would be able to more fully exalt Christ in his body. Paul's reference to exalting Christ in his body didn't mean that that he thought our inner being was unimportant, just that our outward actions reveal what our true inner self is thinking and believing. When we exalt Christ in our bodies, we express by our words (through our lips) and actions (the rest of our body) what we think, feel and believe on the inside. So exalting Christ in our bodies must be our highest priority, just as it was for Paul. Whether we live, or die, we can glorify God through our bodies. So, since Paul felt that his deliverance would exalt Christ, he expected to be set free. He believed this deliverance would come through the prayers of the Philippians, and the Holy Spirit. These 2 work together to accomplish the will of God. The Spirit prompts us to pray according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27), and when we pray this way, He answers this prayer. Since He has determined that we are

part of the process in accomplishing His will, it is important that we pray. And when we do, He answers our requests. Paul couldn't wait to be delivered, because this would exalt Christ, and Christ was his entire focus—whether he lived or died. If Paul lived he would serve Christ and fellowship with Him, and if he died he would be with Him directly, so it was "win-win" for Paul. Paul's outlook on death was great—he couldn't wait to be with Christ, and his outlook on life was great, too, because if he remained on earth, his service to the Philippians would lead to their progress. We see again that Paul's desire for the success of the gospel, and the spiritual success of others kept him from getting down. He looked



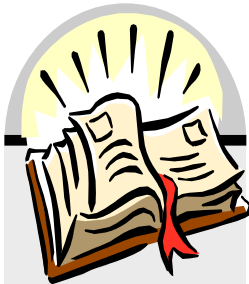
When we all seek each other's success, and the progress of the gospel, joy will result.

forward to helping the Philippians grow in faith, and in joy, and this gave him a constant hope for the future. If he remained he would help them grow in faith, and this would lead to greater joy. When we trust God, we can relax and enjoy life, and, conversely, when we enjoy life on God's terms, our faith in Him grows since we experience His faithfulness. Since Paul knew it was necessary for him to help them with this, he felt he would be delivered from death. This belief illustrates the truth that God never allows us to die before His work through us is finished. This also gives us confidence, which leads to joy. There is one final cause of the joy that Paul had in this passage. The Philippians felt a proud confidence in Paul—they believed in Him. While others criticized him, and slandered him, the Philippians were very proud of the stand he was taking for Christ. While Paul deflected the pride they felt in him back to Christ, it still had to motivate him to "live up" to their belief in him. Likewise, we must believe in one another, and share this belief with them. It will encourage each of us to live up to one another's expectations of us. When we all seek each other's success, and the progress of the gospel, joy will result.

Study Questions for Philippians 1:27-2:11

Paul shows us how to experience true unity with one another, another piece of the "joy puzzle".

1. Read Philippians 1:27-30. How did Paul want the Philippians to act (v27), and what do you think this means? Specifically what did he have in mind (v27-28)?
2. What do vss28-30 reveal as a possible cause of disunity among Christians? What happens in your relationships with others when emotional disturbances occur inside of you?
3. What certainty does Paul reveal for these Philippians in vss 29-30? Do you think that applies to us as well (see Acts 14:22), and how have you experienced this? What has been your response?



"God never allows us to die before His work through us is finished."

4. From Philippians 2:1-4 what does Paul encourage the Philippians to strive for (v2)? How does he define this (v2), and what will it result in (v2)? Why do you think this is true?

5. According to 2:1 what 4 things give us a basis for unity? Why are each of these important ingredients for this unity?

6. What further attitudes are necessary for us to remain united with other believers, according to 2:3-4? What wrong attitudes get in the way of these (vss 3, 4)?

7. Who best illustrates the attitude necessary for unity with others (v5)? What does 2:6 tell us that He gave up to reconcile us with God and one another? What do you think this means?

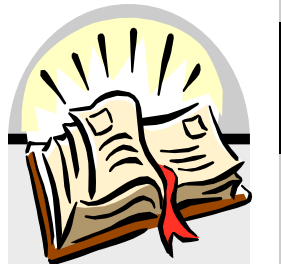
8. What steps did Jesus take to accomplish His Father's will (v7-8)? In your mind which of these was most difficult for Him?

9. Think about the steps Jesus went through in 2:6-8. How would you apply this to your life—what it would look like for you to do the same thing?

10. How did God respond to Jesus' expression of humility (v9), and what do you think this refers to?

11. What will happen one day as a result of Jesus' submission to the Father's will (v10-11), and how should this lead us to live?

12. In summary why should we be unified, and how do we get there?



Memory Verse

**"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
Philippians 2:4**