



**Reaching,  
Restoring,  
Raising Up**

1140 Morrison Dr  
Fort Worth, TX 76120-3426

Phone: 817-451-5513  
Email: allan@celebrationnet.com

**L.I.F.E. Group Questions—(Phil 3:12-21)**

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. Share together what you thought success was growing up. How has that perception changed—how would you define it today?
2. What is the “one thing” you focus on today? How do you think you could begin to focus more on following Christ every moment?
3. Share some of your past successes, sins, and scars with the group. Which of these holds you back the most right now? What could you do to start putting those behind you?
4. What usually gets you off track after a good start? What are some ways you could “continue on” in the new patterns you begin, especially in your Christian life?
5. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

**We're on the Web!**  
**Www. Celebrationnet.com**

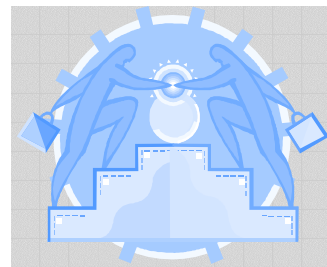
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find  
Yours Below and Join Us!**

**Adult Bible Fellowships**

**Locations, Times, Descriptions**

**9:00**

**10:45**



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS  
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

9:00	10:45
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 Master Your Money (April 18)—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

April 25, 2004

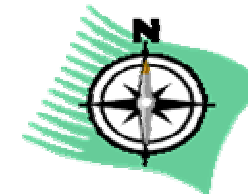
**Enjoy the Rest of Your Life**

*Discover principles for happy living from the book of Philippians*

**Celebration Fellowship**

**The Half-Full Cup**

**A preview of Philippians 4:1-9**



Volume 2, Issue 38

April 25, 2004

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It is well known that people either see the cup as half full, or as half empty. While both viewpoints are accurate, only those who view the cup as half full are able to experience true joy in life. Because Paul realized that this kind of viewpoint was vital for maintaining stability in the Christian life, he not only commanded the Philippian believers to think this way, but gave them practical advice about how to do it. One of things he again encouraged them to do was to put their differences aside and live in harmony. This was so impor-

tant that he urged others in the church to join in the resolution of the conflict between 2 of their leading ladies. The fact that Paul also commanded them to rejoice (a repeated emphasis), shows that joy is based on our choice to respond positively to our circumstances. This relates partly to the kind of spirit, or attitude, that we adopt. When we have a gentle spirit, it is easier to “take things in stride”. Also, when we sense that the Lord is near, we need not be anxious over circumstances, but rather entrust everything into His



**The secret of happiness  
is found in Christ!**

hands through thankful prayer. Finally, when we add constant meditation on the positive ways of God, and a corresponding lifestyle, the peace of God dwells in us and guards our minds. These things allow us a joyful, “half-full” approach to life.

**Magnificent Obsession**

**(Phil 3:12-21)**

**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

In “Magnificent Obsession”, the 1954 film that made him a star, Rock Hudson portrays a rich playboy who, after recklessly injuring someone in his car, becomes obsessed with a career in medicine. He devotes the rest of his life to practicing the healing arts. Devastating consequences like these often cause people to become obsessed with rectifying their mistakes. The apostle Paul was an illustration of this. Having been a persecutor of Christians, upon conversion he became obsessed with making amends for this, and with “gaining Christ” by faith. Because Christ had “laid hold” of him for a specific purpose, he felt compelled to achieve that purpose. People often obsess over lesser purposes like gaining wealth, power, fame or beauty, but all of these things will pass away. Only God's purpose for our lives has eternal impact, and, since He created us, His purpose fits us perfectly. For these reasons, pursu-

ing God's purpose provides the right basis for life. This was Paul's obsession, but he realized he hadn't yet obtained it. Although he wanted to live as one who had attained a resurrection-style of life, he didn't feel like he had already fulfilled Christ's purpose for his life, and he was sure that he hadn't already become perfect. But, knowing that Christ had laid hold of him for His purpose, he continued to press towards that mark. This is a good example for us, because even as mature as Paul was, he didn't feel like he had “arrived”, but continued to press on. He is a good example from another standpoint—he didn't let the fact that he “wasn't there yet” discourage him. In fact, his plan rather was to forget those things that were behind—the past mistakes and “failures” - and reach forward to what lay before him—all that Christ's purpose held for him. Paul both accepted God's forgiveness for his past, and

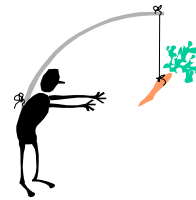
believed in his potential for the future, so he continued to press toward the goal that God had for him. We need to do the same thing—we must not remain stuck in the past, and must believe that God has a beautiful future for us. Unfortunately many think they will never change, that they will always be the way they have been—but this ignores the declaration that everyone in Christ is a new creation. Additionally, many lack the faith to believe in the possibilities that God's purpose for their lives presents. But if we will forget the past, and reach forward to what lies before us, we will experience a life full of meaning and joy. Paul was able to do this because he looked forward to God's goal for him: the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He probably had in mind the call towards heaven, both in this life and in the next. As believers we have this upward “tug” on us that leads us to focus on

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Philippians 3:12-21 (continued from pg 1)

heaven, where Christ is now and forever. This heavenward call greatly motivated Paul to pursue heavenly things in the present, and it urged Paul to live in such a way that allowed him to look forward to heaven. So, Paul was very intense in his pursuit of this goal. He described himself as “stretching” towards the goal, using a word that pictures an athlete who is leaning his chest forward to break the tape at the finish line. He also stated that he “pressed” towards the mark, literally meaning that he pressed “down”, or as we might say, “bore down”, to reach this finish line. As his life illustrated he would allow nothing to get in the way of getting to this goal, which would yield the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. We will have this same intensity if we adopt Paul’s attitude—that we haven’t yet arrived, and that we refuse to give up any ground that we have already gained. We must not allow what lies behind to sidetrack us, and we must focus on the great purpose of God before us, which will occur as we stay in the Word on a regular basis. Because this was the proper attitude for all believers, Paul told them to imitate him, and those with him, as well as those who followed his pattern. Likewise, our attitudes should be such that

we could tell others to imitate us as we imitate the pattern of Christ. Sadly, as Paul said, many are enemies of the cross of Christ. Their desires are their god, they boast about the shameful things they do, and they focus on earthly things. Even though they are enemies of the cross, because their outcome will be destruction, Paul wept for them. This is an example we should follow, and one that was set forth by Christ, who asked the Father to forgive His enemies. In contrast to these “enemies”, we who follow Christ should understand that we are primarily citizens of heaven, not earth, and we should keep our focus there, where Christ presently is. Instead of being “dulled” by the things of this world, we



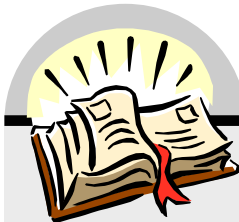
**“We must stretch forward to fulfill the plan for which Christ has laid hold of us.”**

should also have an attitude of eager anticipation as we look forward to His return. After all, when He comes back He will transform our “humble” bodies into bodies of radiant glory, so that we no longer have to experience the failures of our sinful condition. This promise of Christ’s return and our transformation should give us hope as we go through the daily struggles of this life. In addition to this hope, in order to have a joyful, positive outlook on life, we should follow the attitudes Paul laid out in these verses. We should not consider that we have already arrived, but “give it all we’ve got” in our pursuit of Christ’s purpose for us. We must acknowledge the past, and put it behind us; then, we must “stretch” forward to fulfill the plan for which Christ has laid hold of us. Each day we must eagerly look forward to the upward, heavenly call of Christ, and, having made progress, determine to not go backwards. We must be willing for God to show us where we need to grow, and then seek live in such a way that we can be an example to others. Finally, to have this joy, we must extend forgiveness even to our enemies. Having this “magnificent obsession” of fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives will lead us to joy, as it did Paul.

## Study Questions for Philippians 4:1-9

*Paul presents the method for being able to rejoice in the Lord always.*

1. Read Philippians 4:1. What does Paul want the Philippians to do, and what does he mean by this (what does “therefore” refer back to)? Why does Paul seem so concerned and how can we be like this?
2. In 4:2-3 what problem was occurring in the Philippian church and how did Paul tell them to deal with it? What encouragement did he give them at the end of v3, and how did this relate to resolving the problem?
3. What does Paul tell the Philippians to do in v4, when were they to do it, and how were they to do it? Why is the “when” and the “how” important for being able to have joy?



**“We must not allow what lies behind to sidetrack us, and we must focus on the great purpose of God before us.”**

4. From 4:5 describe the kind of attitude or demeanor should Christians have, and how obvious should it be. Give an example or two of how this would look in your life.

5. What reminder does Paul give the Philippians at the end of 4:5, and what do you think he means by this? How does this relate to the first idea of v5, and how does it relate to the ability to have joy?

6. What does Paul tell us not to do in 4:6? What are some synonyms for “anxious”, and what often causes this anxiety? What is the simple solution to anxiety found in this verse?

7. In 4:6 what are we to pray about, and with what attitude? Why does this type of prayer overcome anxiety?

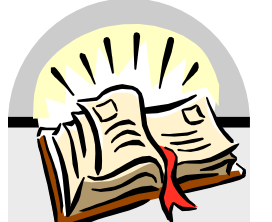
8. What does the kind of prayer that Paul described in v7 do for us? What do you think this means? Define the “peace of God”, and where, according to the end of the verse, that it operates most effectively.

9. Read 4:8. Summarize what does Paul tell us to do, and how we can do this practically.

10. Try to define and give an example of each of the things Paul lists in v8. What value do you think it would have to let our minds “dwell or think on these things”?

11. What final thing does Paul tell the Philippians to do (v9), and to what is he referring? What will be the result of following Paul’s example?

12. List the things that Paul told the Philippians to do in 4:1-9 that help us become joyful, optimistic people, and write down some steps you could take to put these things into practice.



## Memory Verse

**“Rejoice in the Lord  
always, again I will  
say rejoice.”  
Philippians 4:4**