

## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Praise, Again I Say Rejoice, In Control, In Christ Alone, I Speak Jesus

## WELCOME

What are you willing to do to guard what's precious to you?

## WORD

### PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 (READ THE REST OF CHAPTER 4)

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

How many of us have been robbed? How to guard our hearts from being robbed of our joy? Through Philippians, we have come to understand that love and joy are interconnected. We are told to REJOICE in the Lord – this is a commandment, to be done independent of circumstances (**Philippians 4:4-5**). The heart of God is for all of us to be joyful. It is in the present tense – the Christian life must be characterized by joy. The next task given is to be relaxed – to be gentle – and the reason is the spatial benefit of the presence of Christ. If we live in God's presence, there is "fullness of joy" (**Psalms 16:11**). The early church was characterized by their joy (**Acts 13:52**). Our life can have sadness from time to time, but we can still be full of joy regardless of our circumstances.

What are three robbers that can steal our joy?

#### 1) WORRY

**Philippians 4:6** gives a clear command to "*be anxious for nothing*". The tense is like saying "stop worrying!". Many of us are anxious about something. Worry in Greek is *merimnao*, which means a "divided mind" because of many concerns. Normally, we have concerns over money, health, our loved ones, relationships, and other fears like not being accepted. How are we to deal with anxiety?

First, we must understand that worry is inevitable. From time to time, it will come to us, but we are not to make it like a "*permanent tenant*" in our hearts. 90% of what we worry about will not happen. But when you're worried, what should you do? The solution to anxiety and worry is PRAYER – communing with God, supplication by letting God know our requests and needs, and pray with thanksgiving. The effect is that the "*peace of God*" will guard our hearts in Christ (**Philippians 4:7**). Every time we worry, we

should take the time to pray. As we align our hearts to God and pray, we include thanksgiving, showing gratitude to God for all the blessings we receive from God, and even for the problems that we have. These can be moments of greater intimacy with the Lord in prayer!

The Bible reminds us not to worry in **Matthew 6:31-34**. Jesus reminds us that our Heavenly Father knows what we need, and He will provide for us. Why then do we worry? The reason why we do not trust God may be because we do not know Him completely. If we see Him as a good Father, in control, faithful, loves us and will meet our needs, then we can relax and trust in Him completely instead of worrying!

#### 2) WRONG THINKING

**Philippians 4:8** reminds us of where to allow our minds to "dwell" on. The word "dwell" means "to meditate", in the present and imperative tense. We are to keep thinking and focusing on positive thinking – whatever is true, rather than saturating our mind with lies; whatever is honorable, rather than thinking on shameful things; it goes on and on to paint a picture of why right thinking is better.

We are told of the "placebo" effect through an experiment done when placebo (*not real medicines*) still had positive effects over someone who drank it. It shows the power of the mind – our thoughts really have an impact over our lives. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** reminds us that we are in a warfare, and we are to "*take every thought captive*" – to do this means that instead of embracing wrong thoughts, we must shift our focus on what is right and true.

**Joshua 1:8** tells us what to meditate on – God's truth and Word! The effect of this is that we will attain success. If we saturate our minds with the truths from God, we will be able to become

## WORD (cont'd)

conscious thinkers – having the right compass and discernment, we can see things in a better perspective and we can have the assurance of God's promises to us.

### 3) COVETOUSNESS

The opposite of covetousness is contentment. Comparison is the death of contentment. **Exodus 20:17** tells us of the commandment not to covet. Along with the immoral and impure, the covetous is another characteristic ascribed to idolaters (**Ephesians 5:5**). Covetousness is making something become your “god” – it is idolatry, and it can rob us of our joy!

**Philippians 4:10-12** tells us of the Apostle Paul's contentment while he was writing from prison. He has learned even in his dire circumstances, to be content. What is the secret of being content? Paul said that his contentment comes from where his confidence is – **“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (v.13)**. This is God-confidence, a confidence placed on Christ, the true source of power, wisdom, and security! Here is what contentment is and what it is not:

CONTENTMENT IS	CONTENTMENT IS NOT
Learned	Not automatic
Appreciating what you have	Focusing on what you don't have
Being grateful & thankful	Laziness, complacency, or grumbling.
Independent of circumstances	Having all you want
Centered on Christ	Focused on self

God is the true source of our contentment and security (**Hebrews 13:5**). A poor man is rich when he is contented, but a rich man is poor when he is discontented. **1 Timothy 6:6-7** reminds us that godliness accompanied by contentment is a great gain. As Paul ends his letter to the Philippians, he wrote about how grateful and appreciative he was and he does not seek their gift, but he seeks *“for the profit which increases to your account”* (**Philippians 4:15-17**). Here Paul repeats Jesus' teaching that those who give generously will benefit more than those to whom they have given (**Acts 20:35, Luke 6:35**). God wants us to know that the antidote for materialism and discontent is generosity – and that is the secret of joy, givers are happier than takers! Paul appreciated the support of the Philippians believers and encourages them (**Philippians vv.18-20**), reminding them that God can supply ALL their needs, for those who are truly generous. Indeed, the Lord is good, and he who seeks the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing (**Psalms 34:8,10**)!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)*

1. What are the “joy robbers” in your life? How do they affect your relationship with God and others?
2. In what ways do worry and wrong thinking take hold of your mind? What steps can you take to guard against them?
3. What causes discontentment, and what will help you experience contentment?

## WORKS

### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray against the “joy robbers” in the lives of your family, friends, and loved ones. Teach them about the contentment that comes from trusting in the Lord. Start by introducing them to Jesus, that they believe in Him as their Savior and Lord.

### MEMORY VERSE

**Philippians 4:4**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

### WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

#### I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

#### II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.

- For the rest of the Israeli hostages to be restored to their families safely. For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory.
- For the civil war in Syria to end peacefully, protection for Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression for Syrians. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout the country.
- Pray for the Sudanese people and the persecuted Christians there; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.

#### III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

#### IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

#### V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.