

January 18/19, 2003

**Study Questions**  
*Experiencing Joy: A Study in Philippians*  
**To Live Is Christ**  
**Philippians 1:12-26**

**Opening Discussion**

1. Share a time when you went into something with certain expectations, only to experience something totally contrary to those expectations. How did you respond? How might your response have been different if your expectations had been more accurate?
2. What were your expectations of God when you trusted Christ as Savior? Were those expectations accurate or not? If those expectations have changed, what brought about that change? What are your expectations of God today?
3. What is the result of false expectations regarding our relationship with God?

**Bible Study**

1. Read Philippians 1:12-26. To better understand Paul's circumstances that caused concern among the Philippian believers, glance through Acts 21-28. What allows Paul to rejoice in the midst of these difficult circumstances?

2. According to 1:12-20 what is Paul's mission in life?

How does his mission affect how he views his circumstances?

How would the expectations of someone vacationing in the Middle East differ from someone sent to the Middle East as a soldier?

3. If, like Paul, we viewed every experience, every trial, and every opportunity in life as a special assignment from God to accomplish the mission, rather than an obstacle to our happiness, how would that change our attitude? Give some specific examples.

How might God use what you are currently going through to accomplish the mission?

How does that affect your attitude toward this circumstance?

4. To have Paul's perspective in life takes a mature faith. How does this help us understand why Paul prayed what he prayed in 1:9-11?
5. Most people would rather see life as a playground than a battleground. Most are more focused on their mission than being a slave of Christ. They want to be happy, and they believe if they can turn the battlefield into a vacation resort they will be happy. Will this work? What is the real route to joy according to Paul?

6. Paul states, “to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Gain is not just going to heaven for Paul. Gain means God may need to use his death to further the mission. Gain is gain for Christ and His mission. How would Paul’s attitude free us up from worry in this uncertain world?
7. The only way Paul could maintain such a joyful perspective in the midst of suffering is because he longs for the life to come. Notice Paul’s focus on the life to come in 1:19-26. How does knowing we aren’t forfeiting our “vacation resort,” but simply postponing it for now, help us adjust our expectations for this life?

## **Application**

1. What needs to change in your perspective and attitude to truly experience joy?
2. List three things that are going on in your life right now that God might want to use to accomplish His mission. How does seeing these things as part of your assignment for accomplishing the mission change your attitude?
3. According to 1:9-11 what are three practical things you can do to gain and maintain Paul’s perspective and joy on a daily basis?
4. Spend time praying and asking God to help you understand what it means to live for Christ.