

March 1/2, 2003

Study Questions
Experiencing Joy: A Study in Philippians
The Joy of Faith
Philippians 3:1-11
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Opening Discussion

1. Performance anxiety is a result of feeling like you must constantly perform to be accepted or valued. People feel performance anxiety in relation to their job, relationships, physical appearance, recreational activities, etc. Do you ever feel this pressure? In what areas?
2. What would qualify as performance anxiety in relation to our faith? Do you ever feel this pressure? Why?

Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 3:1-11. Review Paul's current situation as he writes this letter. Given his situation, it's worth noting that Paul reminds the readers to "rejoice in the Lord." Based on what we've learned so far in Philippians, how can Paul rejoice in the midst of such difficult circumstances?
2. Paul's warning concerning the legalists is very strong. Compare the following passages:
Matthew 23:1-36 (Remember the Scribes and Pharisees would have been the religious elite of their day. They were highly respected by the general population.)
Galatians 5:1-12
Colossians 2:16-23

What is the relationship between Paul's warning and being able to "rejoice in the Lord"?

In what way does legalism create a barrier to joy?

3. Paul describes his "accomplishments" in 3:4-6. These are his works of the flesh. What might be examples of such works in our contemporary culture?

In what way do people "put confidence" in these works?

4. What does Paul mean when he states that he "counts all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord?"

What things have you counted as loss in view of knowing Christ?

5. Paul goes from counting “those things” as loss—referring to his religious performance—to counting “all things” as loss in verse 8. What things would you be willing to give up to know Christ more fully, and what things are you not willing to give up?

How much is your willingness to give up related to your level of trust in God?

6. Compare 3:9 with Galatians 3:1-14 and Romans 5:12-21. How does this address our performance anxiety as it relates to God?

7. Compare 3:10,11 with Romans 6:1-11. What are the results of faith?

How does this relate to our experience of joy?

Application

1. What must you do to eliminate performance anxiety and experience joy in your relationship with Christ? Name three practical things you can do as an application of this passage in Philippians.

2. What will it take for you to be willing to count all things as loss in view of knowing Christ?

Will this lead to anxiety or freedom? Why?

3. Spend time in prayer for one another, specifically addressing the issues that prevent you from truly experiencing joy in the Lord.