

# PHILIPPIANS

## JOY NO MATTER WHAT

### Part 3: Joy's Focus

#### Big Idea

We may find it easy to acknowledge that happiness is fleeting, but it can be just as easy to feel that joy can quickly be stolen from us. How are we to protect the treasure of joy when it can seem to be more difficult to obtain, but gets taken before it seems that we can even fully embrace it? Joy is a benefit that comes from the Lord – it cannot be generated from any earthly circumstance. The key to embracing and guarding joy is to recognize the essential mindset within which joy must exist. If the Lord is eternal, and joy is only available in him, then joy can only flourish in those who are eternally minded.

*“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.”*  
- *Philippians 3:1*

#### Discussion Questions

- Paul, understanding the huge role that our minds play in our experience of joy, constantly reminds us in Philippians to safeguard our faith by “renewing our minds” to God’s truth. What things in your life compete for your attention and focus, and ultimately kill your joy? What are some steps we can take to renew our minds?
- “The only way to get rid of the pain of the past is to give it purpose.” What kind of things from your past are causing you pain? How could God be trying to “redeem” those things to reveal his purpose in them? How could your story be used to make a difference in the lives of others?
- Pastor Mark Pettus stated that, “There is no joy like the joy of living your purpose” and that discontent can be a gift from God to make us aware that we have not discovered our purpose. In what ways have you found that to be true? What role do “decision” and “direction” have in the discovery of that purpose?

#### Next Steps

- Take time make a list of all the benefits of the cross that you are aware of. Then look for others in scripture that you may not have been aware of. Start with Psalm 103:1-5. Determine which of those benefits you are already experiencing and enjoying. Develop a plan to keep yourself more aware of those benefits and to practice living in them.

#### Prayer Focus

Pray for the group to become “eternally minded,” shifting focus from the things of this world and beginning to focus on what is most important to the heart of God. Pray that the world and all it contains will hold less attraction and that we will remain aware that earth is not our home.

#### Leader Tips

Point out to the group some of the ways in which the society in which we live reinforces being “earthly minded.” Look for specific advertising techniques, media saturation, etc. to demonstrate the lengths to which the world goes to persuade us to keep our minds off of eternal things. Encourage your group to guard themselves in these areas.