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JOY

Philippians 1

Introduction to the *Joy* series.

One of the unmistakable signs of the presence of God in someone's life is Joy. So, a gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms. Christians should be people of joy. A joyful Christian is a good representative of the good news, the gospel to a world that is often joyless.

Are we the kind of church that brings joy to people here inside our church? Are we the type of church that brings joy to those in our community on the outside of our church? Both are good questions to ask.

Philip Cole
Smithville Campus Pastor

Introduction To The 4G Guide

GATHER – GOD – GROUP – GIVE

It's important that we *GATHER* each week as a church family. Still, God wants us to take what He's teaching and apply it to our daily lives. This is the heart of the 4G Guides. These guides are written to encourage you in your personal *GOD TIME* and in your small *GROUPS*. They are designed to help you understand what God is teaching and apply it to your life. This understanding through application enables you to take what you are learning and *GIVE* it to others.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).



USING THE 4G GUIDE

Each week is divided into four sections:

Gathering Time



On Sunday mornings we gather to worship, hear God's message, and be challenged to apply His word. You'll find the weekly Gathering Time sermon outlines and notes sections in this booklet.

If you need to join us online, go to cbcfamily.net and click "Watch Live"

Group Time



We learn from one another! 4G Groups meet to dig deeper into the weekly material. Group Time outlines are simple enough for anyone to facilitate. In addition, short videos and other helpful resources are posted often on our 4G webpage.

God Times



Personal worship is vital to the Christian walk, so we've provided five daily devotionals for each weekly topic. This is your time to meet with God one-on-one in a guided devotional format. Once your God Time is finished, pray, seeking direction for the day.

Family Time



Family worship glorifies God. To help, we have created simple Family Time devotionals. In addition, to help get the conversations flowing, video or story guide links will be posted on our 4G webpage.

cbcfamily.net/4g





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Joy Can Come Out of _____ Places.

Philippians 1:1-2

Philippians 3:4-6

You Won't _____ Joy Until You
_____ Jesus.

Luke 2:10

Psalms 21:6

John 15:5

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus

Philippians 1:1

Joy Is _____ from _____.

Do You Have Joy?

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Unlikely / Experience, Encounter / Derived, Devotion



Group Time

◀◀ LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page 46 for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week’s lesson.

Reread Matthew 22:37. Did you do anything different this past week? Share it with the group.

LOOK UP:

Question: Would you agree with this statement and why?

Fans are happy when their team wins. Players have joy when their team wins.

1. Review your notes from the Gathering Time (Sermon).
2. **Context:** We live in a relatively joyless world. Everywhere we look we can find despair, disappointment, dissatisfaction, and discouragement. We need joy, and a joyful Christian is a good representative of the Good News, the gospel to a joyless world.
 The Apostle Paul often wrote of joy in some of the most difficult and depressing circumstances. Whether stoning, shipwreck, or prison cell, he found joy in all as long as he was able to proclaim Christ.
 The Philippians held a special place in Paul’s heart. It was the first city he encountered after being called to Macedonia. They were a city that had no Jewish core, yet many accepted the gospel wholeheartedly and gave ongoing support to his ministry, even while Paul was in prison. And that’s where he is as he writes this letter to them.

3. Discussion:

- Give an example of this statement in your own life:
Happiness is a feeling; joy is a lens through which we view the world.
- The point was made during the sermon that, “You won’t experience joy until you encounter Jesus.”
 What is this joy based upon? (Reference Luke 2:10 & John 15:5)
- Another point that was made was, “Joy is derived from devotion.”
 Looking back at our opening question, how is being a servant to Christ like being a player and not just a fan?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Joy is not a feeling; it is a lens through which we view the world. It’s a lens we are given through faith in Jesus.*

- Read Acts 2:42-47 – about the first church in Jerusalem.
 - In verse 46b, what was the condition of their hearts?

 - In verse 47a, how did the outside world view them?

 - In verse 47b, what was the result?

 (Who was adding to those who were being saved?)
- What is, or should, our group be doing to “find favor” with others and how can we ensure an attitude of joy while doing it?

God Time Day 1: Having Joy



What comes to mind when you hear the word joy? A song? A person? Or maybe a memory?

The joy that God gives can be defined as a steady delight, gladness, or happiness that is derived from knowing and serving Him. Yes, Christians have joy, joy, joy, joy down in our hearts... to stay! This kind of joy is not the same kind of joy that the world or our circumstances give. No, this joy has God Himself as its source!



Read Philippians 4:4.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Throughout the short Book of Philippians, joy and “rejoice” are mentioned 16 times. That tells us something! Do you tend to be a joyful person? Why do you answer that way?

God Time Day 2: Joy in Unlikely Places



Read Philippians 1:1-2.

¹[From] Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Book of Philippians is a letter written to the saints (another word for Christians) in a town called Philippi.



Circle who the letter is from.

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. That doesn't sound like a joyful experience. And the truth is? It wasn't. But Paul could experience joy in a joyless prison. Why? Because he had the joy of Jesus down in his heart!

Have you ever heard a story about having joy in a joyless situation?



If so, how did it encourage you?

If not, stay tuned; you'll hear more about it this week.

God Time Day 3: Joy from Having Jesus



True joy comes from having Christ in our hearts. From the time of Jesus' birth, joy was associated with the gospel message.



Read Luke 2:10.

But the angel said to [the shepherds], “Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people...”

Underline the words “good news of great joy.”



Now circle the word “joy.” Who is the joy is for?

The joy that comes from knowing Jesus is available for all people!

(After they went and saw Jesus, the shepherds went and told others. Do we share Him, too?)



Read John 15:11.

I [Jesus] have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

Whose joy is in us? _____

Underline the last word of the verse.

Jesus says these words after talking about the importance of staying joined to Him. Yes, our joy may be complete, full – even overflowing – if we abide in Christ.

No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, we can have deep joy because we know Jesus and His sacrificial love for us. Though we can often be our own joy stealers, *nothing* and no one else can steal our joy.

Do you know Jesus?



If not, see Romans 10:9-10.

If so, spend time praising Jesus for who He is and His great love for you.

Ask Him to make His joy complete in you today.

God Time Day 4: Joy Derived from Devotion



On Day 1, we read that the joy that God gives can be defined as a steady delight, gladness, or happiness that is derived from knowing and serving Him. We could call knowing and serving God *devotion*.

Our relationship with God is an interesting exchange. As we joyfully devote ourselves to Him, He gives us even more joy!



Read Galatians 5:22-23.
²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

The Fruit of the Spirit is a famous passage in the Bible. It tells us the result of having the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we are a Believer, we are promised joy and all of these other qualities. They grow bigger and sweeter by drawing nearer to God and learning to obey and trust Him more. This is called spiritual maturity – looking more like Jesus.



Read Acts 2:46-47.
⁴⁶Every day [the Christians] devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Underline what the Christians were doing.



Circle the result.

When we fulfill our purpose (that is, serving God), we have great joy, and He brings the results. So, how is He calling you to serve Him today? (E.g., serve in a ministry, call a friend, spend time in joyful worship, etc.)

Make time to do it. Then journal about the joy that results.

God Time Day 5: Do You Have Joy?

Even in a joyless situation, we can have joy if we have Jesus.



Read James 1:2-4.
²Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

According to James, even various trials can be counted as joy!

Underline what he says that a trial produces.

And what is the full effect?

Sometimes, though, especially when we are in the middle of a trial, we don't *feel* joy. One way to find joy in these times is to both look for and praise God for all He has done in the past and present.



Read Psalm 92:1-4 (NET).
¹It is fitting to thank the Lord, and to sing praises to your name, O sovereign One! ²It is fitting to proclaim your loyal love in the morning, and your faithfulness during the night, ³to the accompaniment of a ten-stringed instrument and a lyre, to the accompaniment of the meditative tone of the harp. ⁴For you, O LORD, have made me happy by your work. I will sing for joy because of what you have done.

Underline anything that stands out to you.

Review what you've learned this week. Assess your level of joy in knowing and serving Jesus. If you want to increase your joy:

1. Make sure you know Jesus. (See Romans 10:9-10)
2. Devote yourself to the Lord and His work. (See Acts 2:46-47)
3. Praise God! (See Psalm 92:4)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Family Time



Main Idea:

Joy



Key Verse: Psalm 28:7 (NIV)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

Play:

Play a game to talk about joy. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen or marker. Ask them to write down things they can think of that either take away or steal their joy. Another way to say this is, “Name things that don’t satisfy you.” Here are some suggestions:

- My bike is old and not very good.
- I wish I had what _____ has.
- I never get to be first.
- I had to do an extra chore.
- My teacher gave too much homework.



Tape the piece of paper with the statements on it to each one's back. Write “joy” on one piece of paper and choose one person to have joy and tape the piece of paper to their back. The object of the game is for the joy stealers to try to grab the “joy” sign.

Play this game outside if possible. Mark an area of safety with masking tape on one end where the person with joy can go. Line all the “joy stealers” up at one end of the yard and say, “Go.”

Any time the person with joy runs behind the safety line the “joy stealers” cannot steal it. When someone steals the “joy” sign, play stops and a new person gets the “joy” sign and play resumes with the “joy stealers” trying to grab the joy from the new person.



Ask:

- Does it ever seem like people or things keep stealing your joy? If so, how?
- What is joy?
- How can you get it?
- Which is easier: to get it or lose it?

We might think that a lot of things make us happy, at least for the moment. But true joy comes from Jesus, even when we are having a hard time. Recognize that joy comes from Jesus living inside you.

Pray:

Lord, remind us not to let our joy fade as we look out at the increasing problems around us. Show us how to live a life that allows our joy and faith in You to shine. It's these things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.



Group Time

◀◀ LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page 46 for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week’s lesson.

What is, or should, our group be doing to “find favor” with others, and how can we ensure an attitude of joy while doing it?

▶▶ LOOK UP:

Question: What does the term “tough love” mean? Is it really love, or just an excuse to exact punishment?

1. Review your notes from the Gathering Time (Sermon).
2. **Context:** Paul continues describing his affinity for the Philippians in chapter 1, verses 3-11. It’s like the child he raised is a chip-off-the-old-block and it brings him joy. It’s a partnership of mutual affinity for the gospel that is based on love, a love that is intentional and “filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.”

Paul, knowing that he may never see his beloved Philippians again, cheers them on from prison, hoping they will keep the love fire burning and growing as they experience challenges.

But while love is welcoming to everyone, love doesn’t accept bad behavior (sin). Love grows in knowledge through education and correction.

3. Discussion:

- Describe the differences between these three expressions of love:
 1. I love pizza.
 2. I love my family – no matter what.
 3. I love my teammates.
- Read Philippians 1:3-11.
How would you describe Paul’s relationship with the Philippians? What made it special?
Which of the three expressions above was it most like?
- Reread Philippians 1:9-11.
How is an outside goal, a commonality of purpose, or a pursuit of something greater than oneself able to grow this kind of love? (Verse 11)

▶▶▶ LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Love one another to glorify God.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

- What new thing will you do this week to love another for the glory of God? Do it and be prepared to share the results.

WEEK 2: PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

God Time Day 1: Love the Family of God



Like we discussed last week, Paul is sitting in prison while he writes a letter filled with joy to the Philippian Believers.

Read Philippians 1:3.



I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you...

Giving thanks is another way to increase our joy. God has designed us and called us to live in fellowship with others. When we live according to His design, He blesses us with joy.

Who are you in Christian fellowship with? List a few people or groups:

Be like Paul; thank God for every remembrance of them.

God Time Day 2: Partners in the Gospel



Read Philippians 1:4-5.

⁴*always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer*
⁵*because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now...*

What is Paul doing? _____



Why? (Put it in your own words.)

The Philippians were partnering with Paul to spread the gospel message – the Good News that Jesus lived, died, was buried, and rose again to save us from the effects of sin and someday restore all creation. Their partnership brought him so much joy!

Together we Believers work to encourage and build up our siblings in the faith and share the gospel with pre-Christians. This shows love for God and others.



How are you being a partner in the gospel?

God Time Day 3: Abundant Love



Read Philippians 1:9-10 (ESV).

⁹*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment* ¹⁰*so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ...*

Write Paul’s prayer in your own words, then pray that prayer for yourself and the people and groups you listed on Day 1.



Read John 13:34-35.

³⁴*I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.* ³⁵*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

How are we supposed to love one another?

What does this show everyone?

Love is important. After all, it changed the world! (John 3:16) We want to receive love, but sometimes it is challenging to give it. There are people who push us to our limits, hurt us, are different from us, or are just hard for us to love for any number of reasons.

Think of someone who is hard for you to love. (Be honest with yourself and God.)

Go back and read the Galatians passage from Week 1 Day 4.

What is the first characteristic of having God’s Spirit in us?

When we draw nearer to God, the fruit of having Him in our lives grows bigger and sweeter. Spend time in heartfelt worship and obedience and watch Him grow your love.

God Time Day 4: Attentive Love



Reread Philippians 1:9-10 (ESV).
⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ...

Yesterday, we focused on love that abounds more and more. Today, let's talk about the "knowledge and discernment" part.

Underline the "so that" statement in verse 10. (This tells us why Paul wanted their love to abound.)

The Bible tells us that love can increase with "knowledge and discernment." Yet, the world has the wrong opinion that love is purely a feeling or an emotion. That is an incomplete picture of love. While love is emotional, it is also an attentive commitment that involves the intellect. It involves knowledge and "depth of insight" (as the NIV translates it).

When we love with knowledge and discernment, looking to love like Christ Himself, we love with the selfless humility of Christ. We gain unity and overcome conflicts. (See Philippians 2:1-11.)

Oftentimes, we know the right thing to do but choose the wrong thing. But sometimes, we choose unChristlike behavior because we don't know what the Bible says. When we learn and base our behavior on Scripture, we will be "pure and blameless," looking more like Jesus.

Read these passages and make a note of what Christlike love looks like: Matthew 25:37-40; Luke 6:35 and 23:34a; John 13:12-14 and 15:13.



When haven't you shown Christlike love? Ask God to forgive you and show you a better response, and to give you strength to obey.

God Time Day 5: A God-Glorifying Love



The love among Christian brothers and sisters is a love that should always increase, growing more and more abundant. It should also be the kind of love that is an attentive commitment that grows more and more in knowledge and discernment. This type of love is Christlike, and it glorifies God.



Read Philippians 1:9-10 from Day 4 and then verse 11 (NLT).
May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Fill-in-the-blanks. (Use these words in order: fruit, salvation, righteousness, glory, praise.)

Our love should be filled with the _____ of _____ shown through _____.

This will bring about the _____ and _____ of God.

Did you catch the "fruit" part? This relates to the moral characteristics Paul told us about in Galatians. (Week 1, Day 4) Love and righteous character come through Jesus Christ bringing glory and praise to God.

Loving others the way that Jesus does should never be for our own benefit. That would be a contradiction of ideas! If we truly love like Jesus, and demonstrate the righteous character He produces in us, it is for His glory and praise and not our own.



Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.
So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

Choose three people you know who need love. Plan to show them Christ's love for His glory and praise.

Name & Plan:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Family Time

Main Idea:

Love



Key Verse: John 13:34-35

³⁴ "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Experiment:

You will need a one-liter bottle with its cap, a thumbtack and water. You will want to do this experiment outside or over the sink. Fill the one-liter bottle with water and screw the cap on tight. In different places around the bottle less than two inches from the bottom, poke holes in the bottle using a thumbtack. Loosen the cap. Tighten the cap. Loosen the cap. Tighten the cap.



Ask:

- What happened when we loosened the cap?
- What happened when the cap was tight?
- How big do you think you could make the holes? What if you used an ice pick instead of a thumbtack to poke the holes?
- If we didn't put any water in the bottle, what would happen when we loosen the cap?



Talk:

Reread John 13:34-35

Is there anything in our experiment that reminds you of this scripture? In the verse, something is supposed to spill out. It is our love for one another. If we didn't loosen the cap, the water wouldn't have come out. It could have been pop/soda in the bottle, and we wouldn't have known it. It's not until it spilled out that we knew it was water. If we never demonstrate our love for other people, we can say that we have love inside of us, but no one knows if that's true, because it hasn't spilled out for us to experience it.

Name some times when you have not shared the love of Jesus with others. Why do you think you backed off from loving them?

We need to allow God to refill us with His love. We do that by praying, reading the Bible to know what God desires for us, talking with other Christians and watching how God is working in their lives, and sharing in worship.

Prayer:

Help us, Lord, not to hold anything back when we are showing love to others. Allow your love to flow out of us to those around us. In your name, amen.



LOCAL

Ministry Partner Service Opportunities

Local Ministry Partners are ministries that CBC intentionally partners with by providing financial and/or volunteer support.

Bastrop Pregnancy Resource Center

Free pregnancy testing, training classes, referrals, and material needs. BPRC is here to support, love, encourage, and help guide women throughout their pregnancy and after.

Visit: bastropprc.org

FEEDING PEOPLE PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY

FtN sites provide a hot meal on a weekly basis in communities across Texas. This weekly meal fosters long-lasting relationships and proclaims the love and message of Christ.

Weekly Site Volunteers needed (Various locations)

Visit: FeedTheNeed.org



A recovery and transitional program for women in need of drug and alcohol recovery, or who have completed their stay in a recovery program and are ready to face the world once again.

Visit: hopehousebastrop.org

PRIMERA FOOD PANTRY

In partnership with the Central Texas Food Bank, Primera works together to put healthy foods within the reach of Bastrop residents with the greatest need.

1st and 3rd Saturday of every month, 6:00 to 10:00 AM.
(Come and leave at any time)

306 Paul C Bell St., Bastrop (Primera Baptist Church)

A joint effort of local Christian congregations to support the community by operating a re-sale shop.

Volunteer Workdays: Mondays and Wednesdays 9AM – 2PM
Open to the Public: Fridays and Saturdays 9AM – 2PM

1642 NE Loop 230, Smithville



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

How To Take A _____.

Philippians 1:12

Turn Your _____ into an _____.

Philippians 1:13-14

Philippians 4:21-22

Philippians 1:15-17

Pay Attention to the _____.

Philippians 1:18

What Is Your _____?

Punch / Obstacle, Opportunity / Positive / Position



Group Time

◀◀ LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page 46 for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week's lesson.

What did you do to love another? How did it go?

▶▶▶ LOOK UP:

Question: What is "The Gospel?"

1. Review your notes from the Gathering Time (Sermon).
2. **Context:** Can a seemingly bad situation really bring about some awesome results? This is the situation Paul is addressing in Philippians 1:12-18. In these seven verses He addresses two adverse situations.

First, he's in prison in Rome, which carries with it many assumptions by those who don't know the whole story. But, because of this, he's been able to share the gospel with *"the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else."* Because of his example, others have been emboldened in their gospel sharing.

Second, while there are some preaching the gospel out of love and good will, others, knowing Paul is not there to correct them, are preaching out of envy, rivalry, and selfish ambition. Nothing under the sun really is new.

Yet, Paul remains joyful! Why?

Because either way, *"Christ is proclaimed."*

3. Discussion:

Let's see how the group did on answering the opening question, "What is The Gospel?" Go gotquestions.org/what-is-the-gospel.html



to:

- Read Philippians 1:12-14.
Put verse 13 in your own words.
Compare and contrast verse 14 with John 8:31-32.
 - How is the fearlessness of the brothers in verse 14 emblematic of the freedom Christ promised for those who know the truth in John 8?
- Read Philippians 1:15-18.
We all can agree, motives matter. In a similar situation, how hard is it for us to have the verse 18 attitude of Paul?
- What is the best method for sharing the gospel?
Someone once told D.L. Moody, the great 19th Century evangelist, that they didn't like his method of sharing the Gospel. He asked them what their method was. They said that they didn't really ever share the Gospel. He said, *"Well then, I like my method of sharing the Gospel better than your method of not sharing it."*
In addition to our gospel sharing "Witnessing Tools" on our GO2 webpage (cbcfamily.net/go2), check out the Life-In-6-Words App at lifein6words.com/app.

▶▶▶ LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Whatever your situation, glorify God through the sharing of His gospel.*

- Pick a gospel sharing method. Memorize it. Use it to share the gospel with three people this week. Record the results and give a report to the group next week.

God Time Day 1: How to Take a Punch



It is actually a very common experience: someone gets an idea and gets really excited about that idea. They pour lots of passion and energy into pursuing that idea. But, as soon as they run into an obstacle, that passion fades away and quickly becomes replaced with questions and doubt.

Paul was called by God to preach the gospel, so then he planted churches and reached people all over the place. But then, Paul got arrested and put in prison for doing the very thing he was called by God to do, preaching the Gospel. What was Paul's response to this obstacle?



Read Philippians 1:12.
Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel,

How do you think Paul was able to have such an unexpected response to such a large obstacle?

God Time Day 2: What's the Gospel?



Paul's goal was to spread the Gospel as far as possible. If we are going to understand Paul's motivations, then we need to understand the Gospel. "Gospel" is a term meaning "good news." Paul had good news to share with the world. What is that good news?

The Good News is that the world and everyone living in it is hopelessly enslaved to sin, but God sent His son, Jesus, to live a life without sin. He was crucified, died, was buried, and rose again, defeating the penalty and power of sin, saving those who trust in Him. And He will one day return to restore all creation.

If you have never heard the Good News before, or if you have never accepted this gift from God or know someone who needs to hear it, you can go here to learn more.



gotquestions.org/what-is-the-gospel.html

God Time Day 3: Obstacles into Opportunity



Read Philippians 1:12-17.
¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. ¹⁴ Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly. ¹⁵ To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. ¹⁶ These preach out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment.

Paul wanted to travel to Rome, preaching the Gospel and planting churches along the way. He was accused of a crime and was arrested and placed under Roman guard. Now, there are some who are taking advantage of Paul's imprisonment to pursue their own ambitions by moving against Paul, likely spreading rumors about Paul in the process.

For many people, the situation probably would have resulted in a great amount of despair. For Paul, the circumstances are an opportunity. His calling has not changed, even if his circumstances have. Paul wanted to go to Rome, and now he would eventually be taken to Rome to stand trial. He wanted to share the Gospel, and his guards are a "captive" audience. More people are being inspired to boldly share the Gospel, and even those moving against Paul are still spreading the Gospel along the way.

For Paul, his circumstances were an opportunity. An opportunity for God to move and be glorified.



Think of a trial or hardship you are facing today. How might you look at that as an opportunity for God to move?

God Time Day 4: Pay Attention to the Positive



Go back and read Philippians 1:12-17 from Day 3.

Continue reading in Philippians 1, verses 18-19.

18 What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice 19 because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

From some people’s perspective, Paul’s positive outlook on his situation might seem absurd or even unbelievable. Even for some modern day, “glass half full” types of people, Paul’s positivity while in prison might seem manic. What is Paul’s secret?

Paul can be positive because he is focused on God’s will over his own. From a human perspective, Paul’s plans have been destroyed, he has enemies moving against him, he has lost his freedom, and doing the thing he is most passionate about is what put him in this position. From God’s perspective, while Paul is not getting to Rome as he expected or planned, God’s will is still being accomplished. Paul is still living out his calling, and God is being glorified in all of it.



Have you ever been in a circumstance where you felt God calling you into something, and you arrived at that calling in a completely unexpected way? Write down the names of two people you will share that story with this week.

Go back and look at what you wrote down at the end of Day 3 about a trial you are currently facing.

Write down three steps you will take for God to be glorified through this trial.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Commit these steps to prayer and obedience.

God Time Day 5: What is Your Position?



We have been exploring what it means to find God’s purpose in trials and hardships. It is time for us to put it into practice. Here are some steps to guide you.

STEP 1: Draw Close. During a trial or hardship, the pain, fear, and stress of the situation can make it difficult to focus on God’s will. It is important for us to first draw close into God’s presence, allowing God to lead us through the storms and to guide us into healing. Write down two things you will put into practice today to draw closer into God’s presence.

1. _____
2. _____

STEP 2: Seek God’s will. In a broad, general sense, we know God’s will. We call them the 3Ds: **Demonstrate** God’s love, **Declare** the Good News, and make **Disciples**. How might your circumstances create opportunities for you to put one or more of these into practice?



STEP 3: Identify your support team. Paul had an amazing faith, but even Paul was being supported and encouraged along the way by many Believers, through letters, and by visitors. Who can you tell about what God is calling you to do? (Your 4G Group, close friends, Christian mentor, etc.). Set up a time to speak with them regularly about what God is doing. Give your support team permission to keep you focused on God’s will, to challenge you when needed, and encourage you when obstacles surface – because they will.

Meeting: Day: _____ Time: _____

STEP 4: Step out boldly. Put God’s calling into action and expect the unexpected along the way.

Family Time



Main Idea:
Salvation

**Key Verse: 1 John 1:9**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Get ready: You will need an empty pop bottle and a small piece of paper.

Experiment:

Make a tight little paper wad with the piece of paper. It should be smaller than the opening of the pop bottle.

Set the paper wad on a table and place your chin against the table, so you will be able to blow the paper wad. Now, get a family member to hold the empty pop bottle so that the opening to the bottle is against the table about a foot away from where you are blowing. Blow the paper wad into the bottle. Keep trying a few times to get the wad to go into the bottle.

Say: The bottle is full of unseen air and won't allow anything to enter.

**Ask:**

Could you make the paper wad go into the pop bottle?

Were you blowing too hard? Not hard enough?

Why would it not go inside the bottle? Was there something else in the bottle? (There was already air in the bottle. When you blew toward the bottle, it kept the air inside, so that the paper could not enter. Two things, like the air and the paper, cannot take up the same space at the same time.)



Discuss: Think about how this experiment is like God coming into our lives. Before He can come in, something must get out. What needs to get out of our lives? (The sin of unbelief.) God offers us a way to get rid of sin, by offering us forgiveness. At the moment we place our faith in Him and the unbelief is gone, He comes into our lives.

How do we get sin out of our lives? (We pray, ask God for forgiveness, and put our trust in Jesus. In addition, you can ask God to help you change your attitudes, your words, your thoughts, and your actions.)

Provide a time for your child, if it is right, to express faith in Jesus and ask Him to come into their life. A few things to keep in mind, though, when talking to your child about salvation: The fact that they are asking questions does not necessarily mean they are ready to make a life-changing decision. Questions are very natural for children, and that's how they proceed from knowing a little to understanding a lot. Use words your child will understand.

**Pray:**

Dear God, thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Thank you that we can have salvation in Him. In Jesus' name, amen.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

How To Live a _____ Life:

Philippians 1:19-20

Commitment Is _____ in _____.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)

Philippians 1:21-22

Galatians 2:20

Commitment Is _____ in _____.

Philippians 1:21-26

Acts 20:24

What Are You Committed To?

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Committed / Rooted, Confidence / Strengthened, Conviction



Group Time

◀◀◀ **LOOK BACK:**

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page 46 for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week's lesson.

Which gospel sharing method did you memorize and how did it go sharing it?

LOOK UP:

Question: If you've been a Christian for any length of time you've heard the quote, *"To live is Christ, to die is gain."* How would you explain that to a non-believer without it coming off as a flippant platitude? How committed are you for the sake of the gospel?

1. **Review your notes from the Gathering Time (Sermon).**
2. **Context:** As Paul continues his letter to the Philippians, we must remain aware that he is in prison and his immediate future is unknown. Will he be executed tomorrow, set free, or same-ole-same-ole? To him it truly doesn't matter. Alive, he will proclaim Christ. Dead, he will be with Christ. Win-Win.

But here's the issue, while the dead thing is a promise, the alive thing isn't so comfortable. Today, in a society that is seemingly totally based on seeking and rewarding comfort, having the commitment to *"live for Christ"* can be a very difficult and costly counter-cultural choice. It takes confidence in the gospel and total conviction of heart.

3. **Discussion:**

- What are three practical, real-life ways to demonstrate God's love?

- What are three practical ways to declare the good news of the gospel, and who needs to hear it?

- What are three ways to disciple (train) others to do these?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Spiritual commitment is proven by physical action.*

- How will you demonstrate God's love this week?

- How will you declare the good news of the Gospel this week?

- How will you disciple (train) others to do these also?

God Time Day 1: The Importance of Commitment



It is so easy to be pulled in many different directions and become paralyzed by competing priorities – why else would “work-life balance” be such a hot topic? This state of conflicting commitments is one the enemy’s key strategies for making us ineffective and robbing us of joy.

The way to avoid becoming a victim of this chaos is to keep first things first. We see this in the first of the Ten Commandments (no other gods) and in the greatest command (love God with all you have). The Bible calls this kind of focused commitment a “singleness of heart.”



Read Jeremiah 32:39 (NIV).
I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them.

Rate your “singleness of heart” commitment for God: (1=Low; 5=High)

1 2 3 4 5

What might you need to stop to move up one number?

God Time Day 2: A Committed Life



Read Philippians 1:19-20.
¹⁹ *because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* ²⁰ *My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.*

When he wrote these words, the apostle Paul had been through many difficult situations, and more were to come. Yet his hope was to *not be ashamed* in these struggles.

Underline the part of his hope that will take place “now as always, with all courage.”



How can you have this same commitment and hope?

God Time Day 3: Rooted in Confidence



Have you ever struggled to make firm plans because you were unsure of what factors outside your control might affect your decision? For example, do I RSVP for this event or keep that time open in case a potential guest is still with me?

One of the best things about following Jesus is that we don’t have to know all the potential factors to be confident in our path; we can place our full confidence in His faithfulness and power. Nothing in all creation can stand in the way of God’s eternal plans for His children.



Read Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)
¹⁴ *Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.* ¹⁵ *Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.*

From what does the Son set us free (v.15)?

When we are no longer even afraid of dying, it frees us to undertake actions which might otherwise seem too impossible or even dangerous.

This idea of confidence in God’s power at work in us has been stated this way:

What would you do today if you knew that you could not fail?

God is not calling us to vain pursuits – things only for our personal gratification and glory – but to make an eternal difference in the lives of others.



What pursuit is God calling you to pursue now?

 How can you alleviate any fears that are holding you back?

God Time Day 4: Strengthened in Conviction



History is full of examples of someone taking on incredible opposition with the conviction of pursuing what is right:

- William Wilberforce fighting to outlaw slavery
- Corrie Ten Boom hiding Jews from Nazis
- Martin Luther King Jr. fighting for civil rights

The force of their conviction helped them to keep going.

The Apostle Paul describes this same kind of conviction.



Read Philippians 1:21-25.

²¹ For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. ²³ I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵ Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.

While Paul is sure that he would be better off in heaven, what persuades, or convicts, him to keep going? (Verse 24)

This conviction is more than a preference. Consider some of the things Paul endured to complete his calling:



Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-25,27

²⁴ Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. . . ²⁷ toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing.

Take some time to consider the strength of your conviction.

To what are you committed, No Matter What?

God Time Day 5 - What Are You Committed To?



Living in this world pushes and pulls us in many different directions. We are told to “look out for number one” and “pay attention to the bottom line.” In relationships we are encouraged to dump people at the least inconvenience, saying you “can’t let them hold you back.” These selfish and short-sighted ways of seeing the world leads to chaos and constant conflict. Jesus calls us instead, to a committed life.



Read Acts 20:24.

But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

In this passage, what cause overrides Paul’s self-interest?

He says the same thing another way in Galatians 2:20:
I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Look back at what you wrote on Day 3 regarding what you might attempt if you were convinced you could not fail. Draw a line connecting it to your commitment from Day 4.

(If you skipped either of these prompts, or if they are not in response to God’s calling on your life, stop now and take the time to examine the reason for your life.)



Ephesians 2:1-10 speaks to where we would be without all God has done for us. It also concludes with the reason for our lives:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.”

Remember, God means for us to find joy in commitment.

What will you do today to experience that joy?



Family Time

Main Idea:
Commitment



Key Verse: Proverbs 4:26

Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established.

Get ready: You will need aluminum foil, an antiperspirant stick, a glass or metal bowl, ice, and some water.

Experiment:

Cut a piece of aluminum foil that is big enough to cover the top of the bowl. Across the center, run the antiperspirant in a line from one edge of the aluminum foil to the other. Keep rubbing until the line is about an inch wide.



Fill the bowl halfway with ice. Then, add cold water until the water level is about an inch from the upper rim of the bowl.

Cover the bowl with the piece of aluminum foil, antiperspirant side facing up.

Watch what happens to the foil. Where the antiperspirant is, the foil is dry, but the rest of the foil gets wet.



Ask:

What do you see on the foil?

What happened to the line of antiperspirant?



Discuss:

In the places where the antiperspirant was rubbed, the water beads did not form. It was a line safe from the moisture gathering on the foil.

Reread Proverbs 4:26. What is the path that we should stay on? God has a path for each of us. When we become a Believer, we begin to walk with God on that path. We the controlling power of sin behind us. As long as we walk with God – trusting and following what the Bible says – then our path will be free from the power of sin. There will always be sin around us. We will be tempted to be involved in things that would not please God. People will try to convince us that it is okay to try something that will not be what God wants for us. Just like the water beads were all around the antiperspirant path, sin will always be around us. God tells us to stay on the path where we are walking close to Him and we will be safe.

Pray:

You are calling us, Lord Jesus, to follow you. Help us not to look back or to our sides. But instead keep our eyes fixed on you. In your name, amen.

The 3-Step “1-on-1 Encouragement” Process

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:23-25

1. Partner-up: Partners should be of the same gender. If there is an odd number three is okay but work swiftly.
2. Partners ask each other these five questions:

	1) Did you spend specific personal time in the BIBLE <u>each day</u> this past week?	These are “Yes” or “No” questions.
	2) Did you spend specific time in PRAYER <u>each day</u> this past week – not just for meals?	Any hesitations or “Well...” responses are circled “No.”
	3) Did you do something specific to show Godly LOVE to someone this past week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, the partner briefly shares the encounter(s) with their partner and, on the provided line, writes the name(s) of the person(s) they showed love to, shared the gospel with, or discipled. • If not, leave the line blank.
	4) Did you intentionally share the GOSPEL with anyone this past week?	
	5) Did you DISCIPLE anyone this past week? (Ex: Sharing with others from any of the Gathering, God, Group, or Family Times)	

3. Each partner prays for the other: No matter how or what the partner has done over the past week, this is an intentional prayer of **encouragement** for the coming week!

Prayer Notes

Gospel Conversations Has Been Rescheduled



Saturday, August 5 • 9 AM – 3 PM

• Event is free, and lunch is included with pre-registration •

cbcfamily.net/gc

