

Name: _____



JOY

Philippians

Weeks 13-16

4G Series - 2023 - cbcfamily.net/4g
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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: _____

Philippians 3:12-16

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

Philippians 3:12-16

How To _____ Strong:

- Stay _____

Romans 12:11

Philippians 3:13

- Stay _____

- Stay _____

Philippians 3:14

Finnish / Motivated / Focused / Committed



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 last page for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week's lesson.

Who did you share your story with and how did it go?

LOOK UP:

Question: Think of a "winner." It can be a team or individual. What are the top five traits that have made them so successful? Make a list.

1. Review your Gathering Time sermon notes.
2. **Context:** As we continue through Paul's letter to the Philippians, we see in chapter 3, verses 12-16, that he gives a recipe for success. The goal as given in chapter 2, verse 10, is "to know him [Jesus] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." Simply put, the goal is to know Jesus and to experience as much of what He went through as possible. That's a tall order and Paul understands that we may never fully achieve it in this lifetime, but it's what we strive for.

So, what is it going to take to get there? Well, much like any successful endeavor, it's going to take passion, focus, and commitment. Wherever you are currently in your walk, you press on toward the future. Leave the past behind, don't compare yourself to others, daily grow closer to Christ, and press on towards the goal.

3. Discussion: Read Philippians 3:12-16.

Verse 12: "I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus." What does this mean?

Verse 13: "Forgetting what is behind," so that we can be, "reaching forward to what is ahead?" (2 Corinthians 5:17) How important is this?

Verse 14: It says that the prize has been "promised" because of what Christ did. Yet we still need to "pursue" it. Why?

(For example, when the Israelites took the Promised Land, God told them, your enemies are defeated, now go fight the battle.)

Verse 15: How important is it to keep pressing on even when we may not fully understand the circumstance?

Verse 16: How can we keep pressing from where we are?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Pursue Christ with the same tenacity He showed for you!

- What do you need to stop or start doing to pursue – to press on with focus and commitment in your relationship with Jesus?

God Time Day 1: How to Finish Strong



Last week in our continued series through Philippians, Paul shared about his journey of faith. One of the important things to realize is that Paul’s story was not yet over.



Read Philippians 3:12-14.
¹² *Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.* ¹³ *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead,* ¹⁴ *I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.*



Circle the word “goal” (verses 12 & 14).

Underline the words having to do with working (“effort” verse 12, “reaching” verse 13, “pursue” verse 14).

As long as Paul was alive, he had more work to accomplish, and he had more growing to do in his faith.

This can be difficult to wrap our heads around because we often think of Paul as some kind of “spiritual superstar,” but even Paul had to work on drawing closer and deeper in his relationship with God.

Paul’s salvation was not just a singular event in his life, but rather an ongoing process throughout his life (the churchy term is “sanctification”). You might remember Paul telling the church to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philippians 2:12). And the same is for us!

Last week we looked at figuring out your story of how you come to faith and how to share it. This week, we will be looking at your continuing “faith journey” story.

Begin this week by taking some time to meditate on your journey so far, and then reflect on what the next step is to grow deeper in your relationship with God.



Where, or how, do you feel God leading you to grow deeper in your faith starting today?

God Time Day 2: A Work in Progress



Reread Philippians 3:12 from Day 1.

Many Christians think of Paul as a “spiritual giant,” some even give him the title of “saint.” But Paul makes no effort to portray himself as such. In fact, he goes out of his way to make it clear that he is still a work in progress.

In a race, what does a competitor do after they have crossed the finish line? They stop racing, they rest. While this is a well-deserved reward for a job well done, it can be a problem when it comes to our faith.

In faith, if we reach a point of believing “I have grown enough in my faith,” we stop pursuing God, we stop growing, and we become complacent and stagnant. This is why it is so important for us to be humble in accepting the truth: “I am still God’s work in progress.”



Take some time to give thanks for God’s grace and for God’s desire to deepen our faith.

God Time Day 3: Stay Motivated



Reread Philippians 3:12-13a from Day 1.

Paul shares his lack of perfection openly and honestly. It is not something to hide. Paul understands that his imperfections are not something to be ashamed of, but rather what drives him to keep pursuing God.

As Christians, we often spend a lot of energy trying to cover up our imperfections. We need to stop letting shame drive us to hide behind a mask. Like Paul, we need to accept our imperfections and seek to grow and overcome.



What would it look like for you to take the energy used to try to hide your sin, and instead use that energy to draw closer in relationship with God? What do you need to stop and start doing?

God Time Day 4: Stay Focused



Paul writes about staying motivated and pressing on in his pursuit of Christ. In the process, he mentions an important truth – the value of staying focused on the goal.



Read Philippians 3:13-14.

¹³ *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.*

Underline the words “*behind*” and “*forward*” in verse 13.



Circle the words “*pursue*” and “*call*” in verse 14.

Have you ever watched a video of people bumping into something, like a door, fountain, etc., because they were distracted or focused on their phone? The truth is most of us do the same thing in our spiritual walk.

Paul specifically mentions the problem of looking to the past because it often leads to one of two results:

1. We look at past success, and then try to recreate it rather than growing towards the next step, or we stop trying altogether (recall Day 2 from this week).
2. We fixate on our failures and allow fear or shame to keep us from moving forward.

Staying focused is not simply a matter of focusing on the future, but rather focusing on the right goal. Paul is not just focusing on any goal, but the goal of “*God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus*” (verse 14). Sometimes, this means saying “no” to something good to focus on God’s calling.

What is one thing from your past or your current life that is holding you back from pursuing God’s calling?

Pray to release this. Seek forgiveness and follow God.



What is God calling you to focus on today? What is the goal?

God Time Day 5: Stay Committed



Reread Philippians 3:13-14 from Day 4.

Now read Philippians 3:14 from the New Living Translation. *I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

Underline the phrase “*I press on.*”

Paul is using the imagery of a race (like a marathon) to help the church understand what it means to live a Christian life. Over the past few days, we have been looking at the importance of staying motivated and staying focused on the goal. This is important because the race is hard.

Many marathon runners will talk about “hitting the wall.” Essentially, this refers to reaching a point of thinking they are unable to keep pushing forward through the struggle. The struggle is determined by where they are focused. Like them, we must ask ourselves: Am I focused on what I am going through, or on where I am going?

Life is difficult, especially when we have devoted our lives to pursuing God in a fallen and broken world. It is important to stay committed to the race; otherwise, we will allow the struggle to stop us from reaching the goal.

It is time to stop being a spectator and get into the race.

What is holding you back from growing deeper in your faith? What needs to stop?

What will you do today to break free from those bonds?

What is the goal God is calling you to pursue?



What is the first step towards that goal that you will commit to taking this week?

Family Time



Main Idea:
Truth

**Key Verse: Philippians 3:12**

Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

**Game:**

Have everyone line up for a race across the yard. Let everyone know they are going to run a race competing against each other, but don't tell them where the finish line is. Just say, "On your mark, get set, go," before they can ask any questions. Ask: Did anyone know how far they needed to run to finish the race?

**Talk About It:**

Paul compared trusting in Jesus to running a long-distance race. A runner in a marathon could take the lead and be in first place for 15 miles. But if he stops after 15 miles, he won't win. He will get very tired, but he must press on and stay focused if he wants a chance at winning the race. That is the only way to win the race and get the prize.



In a normal marathon, only one person wins the race, but in God's marathon, everyone who finishes the race gets the prize. Running the race consists of believing in Jesus until the day we die.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians, he was still running. He had more years of his life to live for Jesus. He knew, and he wanted other Believers to know, that running for Jesus our whole life is the only way to win the prize of heaven.

**Read:**

Philippians 3:12-17

**Discussion:**

- Why do you think Paul compared the Christian life to a long race?
- How does remembering the prize and winning the prize help the runner keep running?
- For what prize are we running the race?

**Pray:**

Lord, help us keep our eyes on the prize of living in heaven with Jesus forever. Help us to run the race to Jesus our whole lives. 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 disciplined. • 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!