

Facebook Live
Rejoice Always? Really?
Lesson 2 – March 31, 2020

Philippians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Please use this handout each day for the next week, as we together strive to practice this principle. Also, print the page with the cards and then cut them into separate cards that you can carry with you each day.

Here's the goal for these seven days: By God's grace and through his empowerment, we will strive to get through every day without complaining, criticizing or griping. In addition, we will speak words to ourselves and to others that are encouraging. We will focus on God's goodness and not on the predicament we're in now.

Start every day this way:

As soon as you put your feet on the floor—or even before—utter words of praise and thanksgiving.

Each day we will focus on one or two verses that will help us rejoice all day long. Here is the outline for each day.

Day 1

Philippians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Psalm 34:1: I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.
Lift up words of praise to God, spoken and unspoken, all day long.

Psalm 13:6: I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.
Sing or listen to praise music during the day as you can.

Day 2

Galatians 6:9: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

When you get to day 2, don't be discouraged if you didn't get through Day 1 perfectly, and don't give up. You're building new spiritual muscle and it takes time.

Identify what, if anything, you complained about yesterday. What, if anything, caused you to lose your joy. If so, that will help you to be more alert today.

Did you complain or say anything negative about:

- o the weather?
- o the fact that you're tired of being isolated?
- o money or your finances?
- o a family member or children – maybe driving you crazy at home all the time?
- o not being able to go shopping or do something else you like to do?
- o your physical condition?
- o your job or what's happening to it?
- o _____

Identifying what or who you tend to view negatively means you can pray specifically about that, ask God to help you overcome it, and see victory in that area.

Nehemiah 8:10: "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

What does that mean to you—that the joy of the Lord is your strength? And why is that true?

Jesus said:

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them" (John 17:13).

What is the full measure of Jesus' joy?

Hebrews 12:2: Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This is the joy that sustained Jesus through all he faced, including his death on the cross. It was the "joy set before him" – the joy of knowing that there was a purpose for the suffering, much good would happen because of what was set before him, and that gave him joy.

Our joy—which is our strength—is the joy of knowing what is set before us. What do you know about what is set before you—what do you KNOW the future holds for you?

If you are born from above, you KNOW

- You will spend eternity with Jesus in a new Heaven and new Earth
- You will then see Jesus and you'll have a sinless new body
- That if you confess your sins now, he forgives you
- That nothing can separate you from the love of God—NOTHING!
- That his Holy Spirit resides in your body to comfort, guide, teach, correct and empower you
- That he works all things together for your good
- _____

So, the joy that is your strength now is the joy of what is set before you! And that joy does not change with circumstances.

So, as Nehemiah said to the people of Israel centuries ago, Do not grieve!

Day 3

Here's one of the most important verses for your faith walk—to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ—that you will ever find:

Ephesians 4:29: Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Pray this verse into your life at the beginning of the day. Carefully guard what comes out of your mouth today. Pray that God will keep you from anything that is not wholesome or beneficial to those who hear your words.

Here's a good prayer for today based upon this verse:

“Lord, I pray that today you will help me to speak words that will build others up. Help me to recognize the needs that others have and give me wisdom to speak encouraging words to them. May my words be a blessing to everyone in my life today.”

Day 4

Psalm 68:3: But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

Here are some suggestions for how you can rejoice before God:

- Sing your favorite praise song to God. Find a time today when you can sing to God alone, and just lift up your voice to him. Make a joyful noise to the Lord.
- Choose one particular attribute of God for which you are grateful, and thank him all day long for that attribute.

Here are some to consider. You may think of others. Choose one:

- God never changes.
- God has all power, wisdom, knowledge, and he is everywhere present.
- God is sovereign – nothing takes him by surprise.
- God is love – and nothing can separate you from his love
- God is merciful and gracious – he does not deal with us as our sins deserve
- God is longsuffering – puts up with us very patiently
- God is good – all the time, in the good times and the bad
- Others: _____
- Take a peace break today—at least five minutes when you can get away from everything around you and praise God, out loud if possible.

Day 5

Proverbs 15:13: A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

This is the day to work on your face—to keep a cheerful face all day long. Remember to put a cheerful look on your face and keep it there all day. Then notice how your smile impacts your feelings, your relationships and your energy level today. Pay special attention to how contagious your smile is. Look in the mirror and smile at yourself!

Day 6

Psalms 34:1 I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

THIS doesn't mean that everything you say must begin with "Praise the Lord." It does mean that in your thought life and when appropriate, in the words you say today, you are consciously aware of God's blessings to you. And so, make an effort to thank God and praise him for everything good you see or hear today. For example:

- For beautiful weather
- For Spring flowers
- For a child's laughter
- For a good friend/mate/co-worker
- For feeling good – not yet sick with COVID-19!
- For a safe home
- For a working car

You get the idea. Just notice everything today—things you normally take for granted—and offer up praise and thanks to God, verbally and non-verbally, for his gifts.

Day 7

Psalms 100: Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

- Don't be afraid to "shout" for joy today. Let your voice of joy be heard, by yourself or with others.
- Sing joyful songs,

At the end of the day you will have completed this challenge. Take time to make a record of what this week has meant to you. Remember what you've learned, how you've been blessed, and the difference it makes when you focus on rejoicing in the Lord always. And I would be so blessed if you would **share your record with me before our class on Tuesday, April 7.**

Just quickly email me before 6:00pm with your comments:

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