

TALKING POINTS

JOY - STRESS

LEARNING IN

Joy is the theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians. In fact, Paul refers 17 times to the words joy or rejoice in his letter.

Paul tells us in Philippians not only should we have joy, but we should have it continually!

Is it even possible for us to be in a perpetual state of joy in our lives? After all, our lives can be filled with anxiety and stress. It can seem like a flood which overwhelms us.

The good news is, God would never give us a command where He wouldn't give us the power to fulfill it. Whether we realize it or not, it's possible to experience joy more continually regardless of our circumstance - to keep on rejoicing no matter what.

Read Philippians 2:9-12, Colossians 1:15-18

Do you believe joy and happiness are the same thing? Why or why not?

LIVING IT OUT

Here are four simple principles we can employ to gain joy in our lives regardless of circumstance:

Practice The Presence Of God - we are to practice the presence of God because God's presence can calm any storm. God doesn't shield us from every earthly calamity, but He does promise to be with us when "life washes over" us.

Read Psalms 46:1, Philippians 4:5

What can we do during stressful times to become more aware of God's presence?

Worry About Nothing - worry is assuming responsibility which God never meant for us. Worry cannot change the past, it cannot control the future. All it does is burn energy with no results. We must give our worry to God.

Read Philippians 4:6, Matthew 6:34

How can we practice releasing our worry to God?

Pray About Everything - prayer is not simply informing God about what is going on (He already knows!). Prayer is the practice of drawing on the grace of God. There is no problem too big for God's power, or too small for God's concern.

Read Philippians 4:6

Do you have a favorite place to pray? Where?

Cultivate A Thankful Heart - if we are grateful we can experience the peace of God which transcends all understanding. The greatest miracle we can experience is to have the peace of God in the midst of trial, and to do this we must have a thankful spirit. Thankfulness and anxiety cannot coexist.

Read Philippians 4:7

Have you ever tried using thankfulness to battle anxiety? Can you recall an event you were thankful for?