



FINDING JOY IN IMPERFECT PEOPLE  
Philippians 1:1-11  
Pastor Scott Farmer  
February 7-8, 2015

### Opening Remarks

U.C. Berkeley's online class "The Science of Happiness" captured 100,000 students! Huge interest. Studies have shown that happy people live longer, make more money, are more productive at work, more creative, are better leaders and negotiators, more likely to get married, have more fulfilling marriages, have more friends, are more generous, cope with stress/trauma, have stronger immune systems, live longer!

Yes, I'm with you. I want this happiness, this joy, too!

God wants this for you and me too. In fact, a fruit of His Spirit filling our lives is Joy! More than feeling good, joy makes us do good.

Paul's letter to the Philippian church will be our guide. He mentions "Joy" and "rejoice" 16 times in four short chapters: what it is, how to get it, how to take it into every circumstance of your life.

[We'll get into "joy" vs "happiness" later].

Note: The group facilitator could come to the group discussion ready to offer background information on the Philippian church gleaned from Acts 16. Who was in it? Circumstances of its founding?

### Warm it up

Take this survey then discuss results as a group.

- 1] How is your joy/happiness on a scale of 1-10?  
1= anxious, worried, angry  
10= peace, joy, bliss, happy
- 2] How are your life circumstances on a scale of 1-10?  
1= poor, painful  
10= great, fulfilling
- 3] How are the important people in your life?  
1= draining, painful  
10= great, fulfilling



## Talk it over

Read Philippians 1:1-11

- 4] [v. 3] What compelled Paul to “thank my God every time I remember” the Philippian believers? What does “partnership in the gospel” [3] mean? What does it look like in a relationship? How could that evoke joy in prayer [4]?
- 5] [Vv. 4, 9-11] How did the content of Paul’s prayer for the Philippians influence his joy in these imperfect people? [In the sermon, Scott spoke into four emphases of this prayer which bent Paul toward joy].
- 6] [v. 6] What confidence enabled Paul’s patience with people’s imperfections?
- 7] [Vv. 7-8] Paul writes that “I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” The Big Idea of the sermon was “People can get on your nerves or in your heart.” How can you get the joy of that affection into your heart?

## Work it out

Let’s assume you have “imperfect people” in your life since there is no other kind!

- 8] How’s your “joy quotient” as you relate to people God has strategically brought into your life?
- 9] Have you received the gospel for yourself? For the other imperfect people in your life? Can you find joy in sharing only the partnership in the gospel amid all of your other differences?
- 10] How do you respond to others’ faults? Do you tend to cheer them on? Write them off? Focus on the future or the past.
- 11] Are you at odds with someone? How could prayer for them positively shape your relationship?

## Wrap it up

Let God pour His love into your heart. Then pass it on. Let Him love through you. Seek joy in imperfect people for whom Christ gave his life. They are in your life for your sake as well as theirs! You need them so you can know Christ better. See them as He does, love them as He does, lift them to Him in hope that He will complete His good work in and through them. You will find joy if you can. You will miss joy if you can’t. I guarantee you will be around imperfect people this week. One caveat - You may be that imperfect person you need to find joy in and for. Love others as you love yourself. Some of you need it right now, right here.

## Pray it through

Pursuing joy is not a self-help exercise. God is the Author of joy. Jesus wants the full measure of his joy to be in you. Joy starts, grows, and contagiously spreads from Joy in our Lord. As you close your group time together, offer Him praise and gratitude.