



PHILIPPIANS
Rejoice in the Lord

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Juan Sanchez has served as senior pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church since August 2005. He is a graduate of the University of Florida and holds an MDiv, a ThM, and a PhD in systematic theology from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition, Juan serves as a council member of the Gospel Coalition, cofounder and president of Coalición, and associate professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored numerous books, including *1 Peter for You* and *Seven Dangers Facing your Church*. His most recent book is *The Leadership Formula: Develop the Next Generation of Leaders in the Church*. Juan has been married to Jeanine since 1990, and they have five adult daughters.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This Bible study provides a guided process for individuals and small groups to find their joy in the Lord, using the book of Philippians as an entry point. Eight sessions of study examine the book of Philippians, continually pointing us back to our joy in Christ. This study is organized on a discipleship pathway of Drama, Doctrine, Doxology, and Discipleship.

GROUP STUDY

Regardless of what day of the week your group meets, each session of content begins with the group session. Each group session uses the following format to facilitate simple yet meaningful interaction among group members and with God's Word.

START

The group session will begin with a few questions designed to help you introduce the session's topic of study and encourage everyone to engage with the study.

WATCH

This space is left blank so that you can take notes during the group video teaching.

DRAMA (MAIN GROUP SESSION)

This section is the main component of the group session. The questions provided are designed to facilitate the group study of the session's topic. The goal is to better understand the story line of Scripture we find in Philippians.

PERSONAL STUDY

Three days of personal study are provided after each group session to help individuals think biblically about the session's topic. With biblical teaching and introspective questions, these lessons challenge individuals to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to respond in faith and obedience.

DOCTRINE

The group session is designed to help us understand the key text in Philippians. The Doctrine section takes this idea deeper. To do that, we need to answer the question: What key beliefs/convictions arise from this text? This first personal study will lead participants to dive deeper into the text from Philippians and related texts to develop a fuller understanding of beliefs and convictions that naturally arise from the text.

DOXOLOGY

Once we understand something true about God, we must respond to that truth with our spiritual worship (Romans 12:1). Scripture should change how we relate to God. This second personal study guides participants to see and understand what the text teaches them about God and His character and offers them direction as to how to respond. This might be a journal-like prompt, prayer, Scripture memorization, or a directed activity.

DISCIPLESHIP

Lastly, Scripture must be applied to be understood. Based on the previous days of study wrestling with the text, we must consider what substantive changes we are going to make considering what God said. This section answers the question: Where is the text leading us to act?



Session One

The Joy of
GOSPEL
PARTNERSHIPS

GROUP STUDY

START

Welcome everyone to session 1.

Ask participants to introduce themselves, including a quick answer to the following question:

When was the last time you clapped about something? What was it and why did you respond that way?

Some people express emotions often and freely, while others seek to keep their emotions in check or avoid them altogether. But rejoicing in the Lord is less about leaning into a particular personality trait or outward expression as it is about leaning into a true understanding of who God is and what He is doing in our lives. That's what Philippians is all about!

What did you join this study hoping to learn? Or, now that you're here, what do you hope to gain?

In our first session, we'll examine Philippians 1:1-11. Paul's introductory words reveal the reasons for joy that he will unpack throughout the letter. They also include a prayer that expresses what Paul hoped the recipients of his letter would gain. We are also recipients of Paul's letter, so let's join in that prayer as a way of preparing to watch video session 1:

Father, as we study Philippians, we ask that You would cause our love to keep on growing in knowledge, so that we might rejoice in You and be pure and blameless in the day of Christ. Let this study result in your glory and praise.

WATCH

Use this space to take notes during the video teaching.

DRAMA

Use the following questions and prompts to guide your discussion of the video teaching.

Considering that Paul wrote this letter from prison, is the attitude he expresses in Philippians 1:1-11 surprising to you? Explain.

Why is thankfulness to God in joyful prayer appropriate in every circumstance (vv. 3-4)? What reasons do we have to always be thankful to God?

Paul was thankful to God for the joyful gift of partnership with other believers. Juan explained that the word *partnership* in verse 5 comes from a Greek word that means “to share or to participate in,” and signifies a deep relationship of mutual love and support. In the case of Paul’s relationship with the Philippians, his “partnership” involved a financial gift, prayer, and standing firm in living out the gospel together.

Why should our partnership with other believers consist of more than just “hanging out”? How does gospel partnership extend beyond standard friendship?

When have you experienced the kind of joy in gospel partnership that Paul described? What caused that joy?

What does it look like for us to partner together in an ongoing way (v. 5)? Why is the joy Paul described impossible in partnership that only occurs from time to time when it’s convenient?

Read Philippians 1:6-7.

How are gospel partnerships related to spiritual growth? How has God used gospel partnerships to cultivate the good work He started in you?

As we commit to ongoing partnership with other believers, God uses those relationships to deepen our faith and reveal more of Himself to us. Juan highlighted three reasons why we should rejoice in gospel partnerships:

1. It glorifies God as the generous provider of His gospel workers.
2. It allows us to participate in the Great Commission.
3. It is evidence of our salvation.

Which of these reasons for rejoicing in gospel partnerships stand out to you? Why?

Read Philippians 1:9-11.

What is the connection between our joy in gospel partnerships and our understanding (“knowledge,” v. 9) of what Christ has done for us?

How should Paul’s prayer for the Philippian believers inform our prayers for each other?

God gives us the gift of partnership with other believers to help meet our daily needs, propel us forward, and assure us of His presence in the gospel work He has called us to. Pursuing the work and call of God with others gives us reason to rejoice in the Lord!

What remaining questions or comments do you have about this session’s teaching video? What was challenging, convicting, encouraging, or timely for your current circumstances?

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Prayer Requests:

DOCTRINE

What would you expect future readers of modern correspondence to find when looking back on the world today? Formality or informality? Emojis? GIFs? Text messages? The first-century Greco-Roman world followed formal practices when writing letters. The letter to the Philippians reflects the etiquette of the day. It also reflects Paul's particular skill in weaving theology into all parts of his correspondence, even the introduction, and leaves us a rich history of first-century believers.

Read Philippians 1:1-2. What does the greeting of this letter communicate about its author?

What does it communicate about its recipients?

What does it state about its purpose?

Sadly, too many professing Christians have a low view of the church—to the point that there are pastors and church leaders who try to make the church more relevant or exciting. This greeting to the Philippians offers a higher view. Jesus is our Lord. He is our Master. There is nothing He cannot ask of His servants. And His aim for us is that we become like Him and lead like Him, raising up even more faithful people who are committed to serving His church. The New Testament doesn't know anything of a Christian apart from a church.

Practically, what does it look like to commit to a local gathering of the saints?

Why do many people find the experience of commitment to the church unpleasant (low view) instead of joyful (high view)?

If anyone had a right to criticize the church, every church, it was the apostle Paul. And as we read through the New Testament letters, we see that he did! But, Paul didn't just criticize them, he pointed them back to Christ and to the gospel.

Read Philippians 1:3-8. What are two reasons why Paul thanked God?

The words *partnership* (v. 5) and *partners* (v. 7) come from the Greek word *koinonia*. We tend to translate this word as “fellowship,” which brings to our minds hanging out, eating food, and drinking coffee. But that’s not how this word is used in the New Testament. It is used to denote sharing and having something in common. Paul and the Philippians shared a deep relationship of mutual love, support, and care. And Paul thanked God for that partnership. We can thank God for that kind of partnership, too! When you came to faith in Christ, we all became partners in the same gospel.

How does commonality enhance friendship and commitment?

In what ways are all believers called to live out the partnership of the gospel?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial giving | <input type="checkbox"/> resources | <input type="checkbox"/> personal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> missions | discipleship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> time | <input type="checkbox"/> sharing the
gospel | <input type="checkbox"/> pursuing
holiness |

Read 1 John 3:16-18. What might it say about us if we do not partner together in the ways noted above?

Some days you don't feel like you can be generous with your time and resources. Some days you miss opportunities to share the gospel and fail to pray like you should. Other believers fail, too. But we can still be thankful to God for inviting us into partnership with His church. Because God is at work in us, He will finish that work! Salvation is a process; it does not lead to instant perfection. Paul was confident about that, and we can be, too.

||| *God works in us to produce works that bring Him glory.* |||

How does confidence in the Lord's saving work in His church impact your view of gospel partnership?

How does knowing that God's work is more dependent on Him than on us change the way you think about gospel partnership?

In addition to partnership with fellow believers, our ultimate partnership is with God. He will begin and finish the work He desires. He is more than able. One of the ways He works is through the partnership in the church. We can give thanks to God for the church because of our partnership in the gospel and our confidence in the Lord's saving work among us. Through Jesus we have a shared work and common goal to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Read Philippians 1:9-11. In your own words, what did Paul pray for the church?

Since Paul was joyful about the Philippians' gospel partnership and confident that God would complete His saving work among them (vv. 3-6), why did he feel the need to pray for their spiritual growth?

Why should we pray for even those things we feel most confident that God will accomplish?

The Philippian church was loving. Still, the unity of that church, like every church, was threatened by opposition (1:27), personal conflicts (2:14; 4:2-3), false teachers (3:2-3), and worldliness (3:17-19). So, Paul prayed that their love would grow more and more, with knowledge and discernment. That is because love without knowledge and discernment, or truth, is just sentimentalism.

How does the world define love based on sentimentalism? Give an example.

Christian love—both for God and others—stands in contrast to the sentimental love of the world. Growth in the knowledge of God leads to discernment and Christian maturity that presents itself through love. Christian maturity is rooted in knowledge and love. Knowledge or truth without love is not spiritual maturity at all—it is proud and leads to legalism. True spiritual maturity seeks to apply the knowledge of God to every situation, in love.

Reread verse 10. Why do believers need to pray for each other to grow in knowledge and discernment?

What does it mean to “approve the things that are superior”?

Life is a series of choices, and we choose what we love the most. We make life choices and relational choices based on what we love and what we know. As Christians, we are to choose what is excellent—what is of more value and superior—based on what we have learned about God—His Word, His purposes, and His ways. This is what the Bible calls wisdom.

For what reason did Paul want his gospel partners to choose the things that are superior?

What is the result (vv. 10-11)?

How are God and other believers helping you accomplish this goal?

Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead. When He returns, each of us will give an account for the choices we made, whether poor or excellent. Our lives will serve as evidence. So we pray that, on that day, our lives will have produced a harvest of righteousness—not for our glory, but for the glory of God.

In light of the second coming, let us pray that we may grow in discerning love, so as to choose what is excellent, in order to be found blameless on the day of Christ.

DOXOLOGY

WRITE IT DOWN

How have you experienced the joy of partnership in the church? Use the space below to write a prayer of thanks to God.

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

One way to grow in joyful, gospel partnership and maturity is to not just read God's Word, but to store God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11). This week, memorize Philippians 1:9-11. As you do, begin praying that prayer for yourself and other believers.

And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11

DISCIPLESHIP

Now that you've expressed thanks to God for the joy of partnership in His church, consider the reasons you are sometimes more critical than thankful.

Consider your view of gospel partnerships in the church. Where do you need to invite the Lord to correct your thoughts towards the church? What is your responsibility in that process?

What steps do you need to take so that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment?

Being thankful for the church doesn't always come naturally. How can you be on the lookout for evidences of God's saving grace in other people's lives?

What would it look like, practically, for you to choose what is superior this week?