

## CCC HOW TO ENJOY THE PEOPLE IN YOUR

### LIFE P1 How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life

#### **READ Philippians 1:3-11**

Today we start a new series, what were going to do is visit the Book of Philippians for a while, in God's word, the bible. What I really like about the book of Philippians is it's a personal book, it's a personal letter. This book deals with a lot of the problems in life that we all will face, it gives us a lot of examples of day to day decisions. But what I like about it most is the book of Philippians is a positive book. The words "joy" and "rejoice" and "be glad" are used seventeen different times in this book. I want to call this series, "**How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life**" and the book of Philippians deals with how to be joyful in spite of circumstances, in spite of problems and situation in life.

We see in the first chapter, Paul starts right off talking about people. If relationships are bad, life stinks. If relationships are strained, life is difficult. If you have problems with people it kills the joy in your life.

So let start off by asking... Do you enjoy the people around you? Do you enjoy the people that you work with, the people that you're married to? The people in your family? The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 9:9, "*Husbands enjoy life with your wife whom you love.*" The problem I find is that many marriages are more a matter of endurance sometimes than enjoyment. We don't really enjoy the people in our lives, we tolerate them, and we put up with them. We endure them.

**What does it take to enjoy the people in your life?**

**Four keys:**

**1. Be grateful for the good in people.** V. 3. Paul says, "*I thank my God every time I remember you.*" Paul said I like to remember the good things about people, focus on the good times we've had, remember the positive experiences.

What do you remember about people? The good experiences or the bad experiences.

Now when Paul said this he had not had an easy time in Philippi. You can read all about it in Acts 16 it tells us the background of this story. It says when he went to Philippi he was arrested illegally, whipped, humiliated, thrown in prison. While in prison there was an earthquake. He was asked to leave town.

I think it is fair to say that Paul did not have a good time in Philippi, I could even say, he had a terrible time. Yet he says, when I think of you I remember the good things. "*I thank God every time I remember you.*" Paul

could have dwelt on the negatives. He could have remembered the painful memories. He chose not to remember the painful and he focused on the things he could be grateful for.

Maybe you have, in your past, maybe you have been hurt by a parent or a partner, and you're still holding on to that hurt. As a result you can't enjoy them today. You're still focusing on the bad and the negative.

Be grateful for the good in people. Pleasant memories are a choice. I can choose what I'm going to remember about the past. So what can we learn from this: What is the lesson:

**LESSON #1: Remember the best, forget the rest.**

I'm not saying that you deny the hurts you've had... I'm not saying that you excuse the weaknesses in other people.

Actually that is psychologically unhealthy to do, to excuse the weaknesses in other people. But the lesson is focus on

the good and chooses to emphasize the strengths. I hear wives sometime say "He's a good man, **but**..." What is the wife focusing on with that comment do you think?

Anytime you hear "but" it means the emphasis is on the negative and not the positive. Be grateful for what you've got! Listen Mr. or Ms. Perfect does not exist! Be grateful for the good in other people.

Paul also appreciated people's loyalty. V. 5: "*You have helped me from the very first day until now.*" Who has been loyal to you? Maybe somebody at work, a friend, a husband or wife. Maybe they didn't do anything really spectacular, but time and time again, when they had every opportunity to walk out on you, to stone you... they didn't. They hung in there. When you were going through the bankruptcy, the crisis at work, the change in careers, or maybe when you were just being a jerk -- they stayed with

you. That's something to appreciate... You ought to appreciate that! They haven't left and they've had plenty of good reasons.

If you want to enjoy others, you've got to focus on their strengths and not their weaknesses and listen we all have plenty of them, weaknesses. With some people it takes a lot of creativity to do what Paul asks. But normally you can find something good in everybody. You want to know how to enjoy the rest of your life.

**2. Practice positive praying.** V. 4: "*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.*" How would you like to have the apostle Paul praying for you? Would that encourage you? Isn't it an encouragement when you know people are praying for you when they are remembering you? What can we get from this:

**LESSON #2: The quickest way to change a relationship from bad to good is to start: thanking God in prayer for people.**

This will do two things: change your attitude and change them. You hear me talk a lot about positive thinking but listen... Positive praying is much more powerful than positive thinking. People may resist our advice and snub our appeals and reject our suggestions and not listen to our help, but they are powerless against our prayers.

When you say to somebody, "I'll pray for you" what do you say? What do you pray? God, bless them? I find that just so general of a prayer now a day. I prefer being more specific for you in my prayers. I like the way Paul spells out specifically what he's praying for people. V. 9- 11 "*And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be*

*able to discern what is best and be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God."*

**Four things Paul prays for other people.** You can pray these for people in your life and you can know that they'll be answered because they are God's will. They are in the Bible.

- 1. Pray that they will grow in love.** "... abound in love ..." means to overflow, like a tidal wave.
- 2. Pray that they make wise choices.** "... discern what is best..."
- 3. Pray that they will do the right thing.** "... be pure and blameless..." and have a clear conscious.

**4. Pray that they will live for God's glory.** "... the fruit of righteousness."

Paul says if you want to enjoy people in your life, you first must be grateful for the good and then you practice positive praying about them.

You want to know how to enjoy the rest of your life.

**3. Be patient with their progress.** Paul looked at people's future and not just at their past. He looked at their potential and was patient with their progress. V. 6: "*Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*"

Paul says what God starts, God finishes. What God started in your life at salvation He will bring it eventually to completion.

Mankind is a great starter but a bad finisher... but God always finishes what He starts. The Bible says when Jesus

Christ starts working in your life He will complete what He started. In spite of the hangups, faults, all my bad decisions, my sins, in spite of all the circumstances that I face in life... God is going to finish what He started in my life. And in your life too! If you asked Him to come into your life... don't give up... You are going to make it! The Bible says that one day when you get to Heaven you're going to become just like Jesus because you will see Him as He is. And that's the goal. God starts what He finishes.

**Lesson #3: God is not finished with people.**

He's not finished with you and He is not finished with me.

So we need to be patient with people's progress. To enjoy people we must allow for growth and for development.

Paul could say, "*I'm not the man I used to be, thank God.*

*But also, thank God, I'm not the man I'm going to be.*

*I'm growing and changing."*

Those of you who are married or one day desire to be married. In your marriage, if you want to enjoy your marriage, you've got to learn to enjoy your husband or your wife right now while allowing them to for grow and develop. Otherwise, by the time they meet your conditions you will have still another condition for them to meet and it goes on and on. You've got to learn to enjoy them where they are right now.

Parents, if you're going to learn to enjoy your kids you've got to learn to enjoy them in the process, while they're growing. And why do I say that because there is no such thing as a perfect kid. They will never be perfect this side of Heaven. And there's no such thing as a perfect parent or adult. If you demand perfection of the people in your life in order to enjoy them you're going to be miserable for the rest of your life. Why, Nobody's perfect.

Paul says that he enjoyed the Philippians... why? Because he chose to ignore the bad things that happened and concentrated on the good. He was grateful for the good that happened and he practiced positive praying, he prayed with joy and for specific things in their life. If you want something to change your attitude start praying for that person who irritates you at work, that person in your home, child or mate, and see what happens to your attitude.

Then be patient with their progress because life is a matter of growth. John 1:12 *"To them he gave the power to become the sons of God."* The Christian life is a process. We're all comers, we're all growing. To enjoy people, you've got to enjoy them in the process, not when they've arrived. V. 6: *"Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* Circle "confident". Paul believed in

God's power to change the human personality. Paul believed that no person was hopeless. He never gave up on people. This is a great promise of God. Claim it for your kids, for your mate, for yourself. Paul is talking about faith. Faith is expecting the best from other people. There's tremendous power in faith. We are shaped by expectations. We tend to live up to what other people expect of us.

**The common mistake is we tend to judge people on the basis of how far they have to go rather than how far they have come.**

**4. Love people from the heart.** I've discovered that if people are not on my heart, then they're on my nerves. If you don't have your kids in your heart, they get on your nerves. If you don't have your husband in your heart, he gets on your nerves.

The reason so many marriages are crumbling is that mates are reacting to each other from their mind rather than their heart. When your wife says, "I feel depressed" listen to her; it's legitimate. When your husband says, "I don't feel this is the right thing we ought to do. We ought to do it this other way." Listen to him.

Listening and loving from the heart hears the hurt behind the words. (REPEAT) Heart love begins with understanding, knowing why they feel that way. Why does the guy at work act like such a jerk? I am not excusing his being a jerk but maybe you don't know the background he grew up in. Maybe he's tons better than he used to be ten years ago. Listen for the hurt, hear the hurt, look for the problems, know what makes your mate tick. You cannot love someone you don't understand. You need to

understand the moods of the people closest around you, why they act the way they do. If you care, you'll be aware.

If heart love begins with understanding, how do you get understanding? **By asking questions and then**

**listening.** The most common complain I hear from people is lack of understanding. What a comfort it is to know that someone fully understand you.

How do you love those people that even when you do understand them, they are unlovable? V. 8: "*God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*" Circle "affection". In Greek the word "affection" is the word for "intestines". Paul would say, "*I've got a gut feeling of love for you.*" It is intensive love that makes me love even the unlovely. That is not a natural kind of love. It is a supernatural kind of love and that's why Paul said it's not from himself, but it's the *affection of Christ Jesus.*

Human love wears out and dries up and dies on the vine.

The only kind of love that lasts and lasts in spite of heartache and difficulty in tough circumstances is God's love -- *the affection of Jesus Christ.* That's the only kind of love that lasts. Romans 5:5 "*God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.*" God's love is not something you work up. But it is something that is poured into me by the Holy Spirit as I let Him live in me day by day. God's love is something He does in me and through me. It is a gift as you let the Holy Spirit live in you moment by moment.

Life is too short to not enjoy the people in your life. If you don't learn to enjoy the people that God has placed around you in your life you will be miserable. As Paul begins this great book about joy (and he's going to deal with all the common kill-joys we experience in life in this

series) he starts it off by talking about people. People will rob your joy unless you learn how to respond to them the way Jesus did.

**LESSON #4: The secret of enjoying the people in my life is to be: filled with God's love.**

The way you do this is being thankful and praying for those around you. Make a prayer list with specific requests you're praying for.

Who do you need to be patient with in their progress? Somebody at work? Your kids? Your husband and his progress? You look at him and you say look how far he's got to go in being the spiritual leader of your home but you've forgot to look at how far he's already come.

Who do you need to start loving from the heart not the head? That's what it's all about -- enjoying your family,

your church. When you really love each other, that's what fellowship is all about.