



Overview: Joy & Peace (Paul)



Story:

Paul was a Jew born in Tarsus. The son of Pharisees, he was proud of his Hebrew heritage and dedicated to preserving Israel's traditions. Rabbi Gamaliel educated Paul, and he became an expert in the Jewish understanding and interpretation of God's law. Paul knew ancient Greek and Roman literature, philosophy, and religions. Paul was a teacher and a missionary to Asia Minor and present-day Greece.

Key Bible Verses:

—Jesus called Paul to be an Apostle while traveling on the Damascus Road to preach and convert Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. (Acts 26:12–18)

—Paul was the best Jew and Pharisee of his generation, though he claimed to be the least apostle of Christ. (Phil. 3:4–6; Gal. 1:13–14; 1 Cor. 15:9–10; 2 Cor. 11:22–30)

—After his conversion, Paul had compassion for unbelievers and understood his calling was to love all people with genuine affection. (Rom. 12:9)

Lessons from Paul

Paul was in prison when he wrote the book of Philippians and said, "I have found the secret of being content no matter the circumstances." The Bible tells us peace is possible and commands us not to covet, which means we do not want what others have. Coveting says, "I'm not satisfied if I don't have these things." God commands us to love Him enough to be satisfied in all circumstances. The 1st and 10th commandments bookend the others. The 1st says to love God with all your heart and put nothing before Him, and the 10th tells us not to desire what others have. You will be content with everything if you love God above all else. God created a beautiful world, and it's okay to want the good things He created, but if you love God first, you can look at those things and know they won't bring lasting joy and peace, so you don't have to lie, cheat, steal, or be angry that you don't have what others do. The virtues of the Ten Commandments (forgiveness, purity, generosity, integrity) flow out of that into our lives when our identity is in Christ, and we love God above all else, no matter what.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (Phil. 4:4)



LESSON: JOY & PEACE (Paul)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (Phil. 4:4)

What is joy and peace?

- Joy is a permanent condition inside you that comes from knowing you are okay, even if your circumstances are not.
- Peace is confidence and trust in God's control of your life and a calm heart, free of trouble and fear.

Trust, Faith, Joy, and Peace

- If we trust God, our faith will bring us joy and peace, no matter our circumstances.
- If we rejoice in God, we won't be easily distracted or disappointed by troubles because joy is the cure for unhappiness and boredom.

How can I have joy and peace?

- Let go of any false gods you think will bring happiness, confess your love for God above all else, and know God is your strength.
- Nothing competes for your attention or affection when you love God above all else; having what you love the most brings peace.

Role-play

- Conversation Starter: Think of something you want.
Thought Challenge: What happens if you get it and if you don't?
- Conversation Starter: Do you expect disappointments in your life?
Thought Challenge: How do disappointments bring joy and peace?

Lessons

- Pray that God empties your heart from worry and fear, trust God's wisdom, and believe your strength comes from Him.
- It's God who judges, loves, and accepts you, and if you hold on to that, your identity is secure in Christ and that brings joy and peace.

Take-away: Joy & Peace (Paul)

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We have joy
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Scripture: Joy & Peace (Paul)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (Phil. 4:4)

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil. 4:9)

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. (Phil. 4:11-12)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Rom. 15:13)