



## **“Striving to Rejoice in the Lord”**

August 8, 2021

*Philippians 3:1–14*

*[1] Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.*

*[2] Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. [3] For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—[4] though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—[10] that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11] that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

*[12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (ESV)*

1. Fun Question: What is a joyful day you'd love to go back and relive again? What about it do you think gave you so much joy?
2. In vs 1-6, Paul talks about what rejoicing in the Lord is NOT, and that is putting confidence in the flesh. Recall moments in your life when you relied on your own work and accomplishments, how and when did you realize that this was not where true joy is found in the Christian life?
3. Read vs 7-10. Paul now speaks on what rejoicing in the lord IS, and that is putting our confidence in knowing Christ. Paul says that knowing Christ is “gaining Christ” and “being found in Him.” And second, that he wants to know Christ and the “power of his

resurrection" and "share in his sufferings." Both of these pairs are describing a *relational* knowing, not a *factual* knowing of God. Between knowing God (relational knowing) versus knowing about God (factual knowing), what difference has that made in your life?

4. In the book *The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation*, Hendricks and Wilder define joy as a relational emotion. They write, "Joy is the feeling of being in relationship with someone who is happy to be with you." So rejoicing in the Lord means we feel the feeling of being in relationship with our God who is happy to be with us. What is hindering you from experiencing God's joy? What are some things you can do to regain a sense of God's joy for you, and in turn, finding the true joy God has always meant for you to have?