

Joy
Part 5 - Do's and Don'ts to Keeping Your Joy

Philippians 4:4
"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

In this series, we have discussed the benefits of joy; but how do you keep that joy? Many start out with plenty, but over time joy can fade. Today we will look at "do's and don'ts", that Paul outlines, to keep our joy.

1. Don't Descend Into Legalism // Do Cultivate A Passion For Knowing Him

Joy is lost when rule-following is glorified for outward appearance (legalism) rather than obedience from the heart. Joy lives when you are led and empowered by the Holy Spirit vs. a rule book. There is real joy in knowing God, not simply knowing *about* Him.

Reflect: How does a relationship with the Holy Spirit steer you away from legalism and toward joy? What treasures have you found in return for cultivating a passion for knowing Him?

Read: Philippians 3:2-4 The Message (MSG)

"...All they're interested in is appearances...The real believers are the ones the Spirit leads..."

Philippians 3:7-12 New International Version (NIV)

"...I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ..."

2. Don't Live In The Past // Do Look To The Future

To keep your joy you must not dwell on the past but keep a positive vision for the future. It's not that you don't remember; you just don't allow memories to manipulate you. There is no condemnation for those that are in Christ! You will have overwhelming joy when your focus is on your eternal destiny and pleasing God while on earth (2 Cor. 5:9).

Reflect: How can you keep memories from draining your joy and manipulating you? What do you need a positive vision for in your life? Do you find joy in pleasing God?

Read: Philippians 3:13 New International Version (NIV)

"...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,"

Philippians 3:20 New International Version (NIV)

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, Jesus Christ,"

3. Don't Mail It In

There is joy when you do your best! Playing to play and playing to win are separated by 3% more effort.

Read: Philippians 3:14 New International Version (NIV)

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ."

Summary

Make every effort to avoid a legalistic mindset and do not let the past steal your joy. Joy is kept when you pursue a relationship with the Holy Spirit, look to the future, and give your best for Christ.

Prayer

Make time to pray for one another before you dismiss your group.