

21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Come seek God intensely for 21 days.

For the last two years, the people of Christ Fellowship have devoted ourselves to God in a season of prayer and fasting for 21 days. We have experienced supernatural healings — physically, relationally and spiritually. Many people have been baptized. These 21-day seasons have been transforming, divine, supernatural, beyond all human expectation.

So, as we enter 2021, I invite you to seek God in prayer and fasting from January 11 to 31. In 2019 our focus was revival and in 2020 knowing God. Now in 2021 we will focus on joy in Christ. Right in the middle of a pandemic, by faith, we seek to experience and radiate joy in Christ. Imagine joining with our entire church family as we become people of joy in a time when so many are feeling the opposite — despair and anxiety.

This focus ties directly to **our new vision**: to reduce loneliness, anxiety and addiction by having meaningful conversations where people experience Christ through us. The power to change is Christ. It is in experiencing Christ that people can reduce loneliness, ease anxiety and break addictions.

For these 21 days in 2021, rather than meeting every night in the worship center as in the previous two years, we are calling for each of us to **engage God individually and with a prayer partner**. You're also invited to join with others live on the Christ Fellowship Facebook page for a brief, guided prayer time at 7:00 pm every evening.

Each week on Monday night, we will hold **gatherings for worship and prayer** at 7:00 pm (January 11, 18 and 25). Then we will culminate the 21 days on January 31 with a worship celebration that evening at 7:00.

Over these 21 days, my hope is that you will personally pray and fast to experience joy in Christ that overcomes our chaos. May the Spirit of God move with supernatural power in our lives, in our church, and in our community.

What will God do in your life at the start of this new year, as we seek to experience Christ's joy? How will he move in the relationships around you? How will Christ Fellowship shine the joy of Christ ever brighter in our community?

Let's find out together. As God transforms you to experience joy in Christ, I invite you to email me at bmiller@cfhome.org so I can celebrate with you. Let's share the stories of what God does.

In Christ's joy,
Bruce,
Senior Pastor

HOW TO GET STARTED

Fast

Choose something to fast from. Check out the Christ Fellowship Home mobile app or visit cfhome.org/21days for tips on fasting and ideas about what you could sacrifice over the 21 days. Use time you gain from fasting to engage with God individually.

Engage God individually

Set a time to pray and read the Bible and use this guide to help you. Since we are not gathering together daily in the Worship Center, commit to spending that hour in prayer. See the resource, "A Guide for Spending an Hour in Prayer" at cfhome.org/21days.

Find a prayer partner

Find a prayer partner to walk with you through the 21 days. Talk daily with your prayer partner(s) in person, or by video chat, phone, or text. Share what you are learning. If you are in a Life Group or other small group, you may want to choose a partner from there.

Unite with others in prayer and worship

Join us for weekly worship and prayer at the McKinney campus (if you feel it is safe for you to do so). We will start at 7:00 pm on Mondays, January 11, 18, 25, and on the final night, Sunday, January 31.

Join with others live and online each night at 7:00 pm for guided prayer on Christ Fellowship McKinney's Facebook page.

During this season, whenever you meet with your small group, use that time for prayer.

Using the Engage God Daily

We will read central passages on joy in the New Testament supported by key verses in the Old Testament. As we read, study, memorize, and mediate on the Word of God, we will prayerfully seek to experience joy in Christ, no matter what our circumstances or emotions.

Each day the Engage God Daily will guide you to:

- Pray the theme verse (Romans 15:13) and review that week's memory verse.
- Read the passage from the Bible for that day.
- Pray along the themes present in the passage.
- Journal what you sense God is saying to you by his Spirit in his Word
- Share what you are learning with your prayer partner

Theme verse and prayer for each day

Romans 15:13 is the theme verse for this year's 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit

Defining joy

Before we dive into Day One, it's important that we understand how the Bible defines joy. Joy is an internal state of gladness that often expresses itself outwardly. *It's more a state of being than an emotion.* In the Bible joy comes from God as a gift that we embrace in response to who he is, to what he has done, and to what he promises to do. *Joy results from a choice made in the power of the Holy Spirit to rejoice.*

This definition is a relief to the many people who struggle with mood disorders such as depression or anxiety. These Christians often experience unnecessary guilt or shame because they do not feel happy. And yet, joy is possible, even without any positive emotions.

Understanding joy in this way also helps us when we encounter hardships and suffering. In difficult times, you can choose to trust God and rejoice in him. Mature Christians are not "happy" all the time. Their emotions are not always bright and cheery. Jesus himself was sometimes sad. *Right in the middle of difficult trials, joy arises from the settled assurance that God is good and great, the quiet confidence that ultimately all is well, and the determined choice to rejoice in God.*

PREPARATION WEEK

January 4-10

Our 21 days of prayer and fasting will officially begin on January 11, so we will use this week to prepare our hearts. This Sunday's sermon will focus on John 15-17 as we consider how we can find joy in God himself. As we prepare for a dedicated time of prayer and fasting, this week's Engage God Daily will feature those chapters.

This week's memory verse

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

Day ONE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review this week's memory verse:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on John 15-17

John 15–17 records Jesus' final meeting with his disciples in the upper room where they celebrated the Last Supper together. The disciples are anxious and fearful as they anticipate Jesus leaving them. They don't understand what's happening or why. And yet, Jesus explains that *we can experience permanent joy in God regardless of circumstances as we more and more know him personally in the Word and in prayer.*

Today, we want to get an overview of the entire passage by reading it in one sitting. Read it in your own Bible and highlight every use of the word "joy" or "rejoice." Also notice the big

ideas and major themes. Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through his Word.

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Praise God the Father that he sent Jesus Christ into the world to save us.
- Ask God to show you how you should fast during the 21 days, starting next week.
- Thank the Father and Jesus for sending the Holy Spirit, our advocate, comforter, and teacher.
- Pray that you will experience joy in Christ.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

TWO

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: John 15:1-17.

Look for what you learn about Christ and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. How is Jesus like the vine, and how are we like branches? Meditate on this image and ask God to reveal its meaning to you.

John 15:1–17

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch

that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.
7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

Go back and focus on John 15:11. What do you learn about joy from this passage? How does the image of the vine and the branches give insight into how to experience joy in Christ? What do you think it means to have Christ's joy in you?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Praise God that you can be in Christ, like a branch in a vine.
- Ask God to confirm to you how you should fast for these 21 days.
- Ask him who you should invite to be your prayer partner for the 21 days.
- Pray that you will remain in Christ's love by obeying his commands.
- Pray that Christ's joy will be in you and that your joy will be complete.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, and how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

THREE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete.(John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: John 15:26–16:15

Look for what you learn about the Holy Spirit and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God.

John 15:26–16:15

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴ I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

How is the Spirit described? What are his titles? What does he do? How do you think the Spirit helps us experience joy in Christ?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank Jesus for sending the Spirit from the Father.
- Ask God to confirm in you how you should fast for these 21 days.
- Ask God to guide as you invite someone to be your prayer partner.
- Ask the Spirit to show you Jesus, to guide you into truth about Jesus and joy.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about the Holy Spirit as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray together.

FOUR

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: John 16:16-33.

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Notice what Jesus says about grief turning into joy? How is the comparison to a pregnant woman giving birth helpful?

John 16:16–33

¹⁶ Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

¹⁷ At this, some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸ They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

¹⁹ Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" ²⁰ Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

²⁵ "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

²⁹ Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.

³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

³¹ "Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. ³² "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

How secure is your joy in Christ? How is prayer connected with joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for joy in Christ that overcomes grief.
- Ask God to give you strength to fast for these 21 days.
- Ask God to give you complete joy in Christ.
- Thank Jesus for overcoming the world.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage, by his Spirit?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

FIVE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: John 17:1-26

This is Jesus' prayer for us, his followers. It's an amazing window into Jesus' relationship with the Father. Notice what Jesus prays for you and me. What seem to be the major concerns on his mind?

John 17:1–26

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

³Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you

have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶ "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Take special note of verse 13. What do you think it means to have the full measure of Christ's joy? How does Jesus' prayer connect with our joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank Jesus for praying for you. He still does today.

- Ask God to help you have unity with fellow believers.
- Pray that you will experience the full measure of Christ's joy.
- Ask the Spirit to sanctify you by the Word.
- Pray that Jesus' love more and more fills you.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about Jesus as you study his prayer to God the Father?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this passage, by his Spirit?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

DAY SIX

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on these verses today: selected verses from the Old Testament.

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God.

Jeremiah 15:16

When your words came, I ate them; they were my **joy** and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty.

How does God's Word impact our joy?

Isaiah 61:10

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul **rejoices** in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Notice how Isaiah relates to God. Today, try to delight greatly in the Lord. Rejoice in your God. Consider what he has done for you. Journal your delight.

Nehemiah 8:10

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**"

How is the joy of the Lord a strength? How could you use that strength today?

Psalm 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with **joy** in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Where do we find joy?

Psalm 43:4

Then I will go to the altar of God, **to God, my joy and my delight**. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.

Meditate on how God himself is your joy and your delight.

Psalm 94:19

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me **joy**.

Pray that God will transform your great anxiety into joy.

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Ask God to show you how joy can be your strength.
- Rejoice in God. Tell him how much you delight in him.
- Give all your worries to God and ask him to replace them with joy.
- Take some of the verses you have read and turn them into prayers.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you by his Spirit, through these verses?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

SEVEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

READ

Read and meditate on these verses today: Selected verses on God and joy from the New Testament.

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God.

Matthew 13:44

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his **joy** went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

What is like is the treasure and how does it bring such joy? What is that kind of joyful treasure worth to you?

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Meditate on our theme verse. Read the verse a phrase at a time. How is God described? What does Paul pray that God do for us? Notice the word that describes “joy.” How is trust related to joy? Notice where the power comes from to have peace, joy and hope.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Why do you think joy is a fruit of the Spirit? Why would the Spirit’s presence in someone’s life produce joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Pray that your love for God will grow.
- Thank God for his treasure.
- Ask God to prepare you to start your fast tomorrow.
- Pray that you will experience ever more joy in Christ.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you by his Spirit, through these verses?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

WEEK ONE

Last week we prepared our hearts for 21 days of dedicated prayer and fasting. Now we're ready to begin! Let's commit ourselves to this time and wait expectantly to see what the Lord will do in our church community.

Memory verse for the week:

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

Day ONE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on these chapters today: **Philippians 1-4**

This week we will look at joy in the book of Philippians. Paul's letter teaches us how in Christ we can have joy in others. On this first day of the week read through the entire book in your own Bible, highlighting every use of the words "joy" and "rejoice."

Philippians has been called the book of joy because it's Paul's most joyful letter. And it was written from a Roman jail cell! As you read, make note of your first impressions about what Paul says about joy. Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God.

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for giving us his Word
- Confess any sin God is bringing to your mind.
- Ask God for strength to begin your fast.

- Ask God for how to encourage your prayer partner.
- Pray that the Spirit will give you insight into joy in Philippians.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you by his Spirit, through his Word?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day TWO

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 1:1-11**

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Notice why Paul prays with joy.

Philippians 1:1–11

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 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.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

For what does Paul thank God? Why does he pray with joy? Read Paul's prayer in verses 9–11 slowly, as a model for your prayers.

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God people who are your partners in the gospel. Thank God for your prayer partner.
- Thank God for "carrying to completion" his good work in you.
- Confess any sin God is bringing to your mind.
- Pray Paul's prayer in your own words.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you by this Spirit, through this passage.

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day THREE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 1:12-30**

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Notice the reasons Paul gives for rejoicing in spite of conflict. What's Paul's reason to live?

Philippians 1:12–30

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me,

to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Read verse 25 again. How is verse 21 connected to verse 25? Imagine verse 25 being your life purpose. How do you think Paul can be joyful when people oppose him and he is suffering and has struggles?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Praise God that the gospel of Jesus Christ is being communicated.
- Confess any envy, rivalry, or selfish ambition God is bringing to your mind.
- Pray that God will give you the grace to live for Christ alone.
- Pray that you will live for other's progress and joy in the faith.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about yourself and the purpose of life as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day FOUR

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Review the memory verse for the week:

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

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Philippians 2:1-18

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. How can the Philippians make Paul's joy complete? Why is Paul glad and rejoicing, and why should they rejoice with him?

Philippians 2:1–18

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

How could adopting the mindset of Christ bring unity to the body and how might that result in greater joy? How does grumbling or arguing rob us of joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Confess any selfish ambition, vain conceit or pride God is bringing to your mind.
- Praise Jesus Christ for humbling himself for us on the cross.
- Pray that you will develop the same mindset as Christ.
- Confess any grumbling or arguing.
- Pray your life will shine for Christ.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day FIVE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 2:19-30**

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Pay attention to the people Paul mentions in this section of the letter.

Philippians 2:19–30

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

*How would you describe Timothy? Epaphroditus? How are the Philippians to welcome them?
How do you envision that Timothy and Epaphroditus brought Paul joy?*

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for people like Timothy and Epaphroditus.
- Pray that you can imitate their unselfish service to God.
- Pray you will have the courage to take risks for God.
- Ask God who you could honor with great joy.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day SIX

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 4:1-20**

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Who is Paul's joy and crown? Notice the command repeated twice in verse four.

Philippians 4:1–20

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Look again at verse 4. How do you think “joy” can be commanded? (Hint: think about how we defined joy on Day One of last week.) For what did Paul rejoice greatly?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for brothers and sister whom you love.
- Confess any conflict with a fellow brother or sister.
- Ask God to give you the strength to rejoice always.
- Pray for God’s peace that transcends all understanding.
- Pray to be content no matter the circumstances in God’s strength.

JOURNAL

What are you learning about God as you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day SEVEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: selected verses from Paul on joy in others.

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God.

Romans 12:15

¹⁵ **Rejoice** with those who **rejoice**; mourn with those who mourn.

With whom could you do this today? Or this week?

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20

¹⁹ For what is our hope, **our joy**, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, **you are our glory and joy**.

Who is Paul's joy, glory, and crown?

2 Timothy 1:4

⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with **joy**.

How do you think seeing Timothy would fill Paul with joy? How do others fill you with joy?

Philemon 7

Your love has given me **great joy** and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

Philemon was a good friend and partner in the ministry with Paul. Why has he brought Paul great joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Rejoice in the Lord.
- Thank and praise God for the people who bring you joy, who are your crown.
- Ask God to show you who you could encourage to fill them with joy.
- Pray for how you could refresh the hearts of God's people and thus bring them joy.

WEEK TWO

Welcome to week two of 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting! We're praying that you are connecting with God and others during this time, and that the Spirit is bringing you joy.

This week's memory verse:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

Day EIGHT

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Luke 15:1-32. In this passage Jesus tells three stories of something lost being found, and the great joy that results.

On day one, we are reading the entire passage for the week in our own Bibles. What theme(s) do you see in the chapter? Where do you see joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God that he pursues lost people.
- Confess ways that you are or have been lost.
- Ask God for strength to continue your fast. If you have broken it, just start right back.
- Ask God how you can encourage your prayer partner this week.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek Christ's joy?

What do you sense God is saying to you through this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day NINE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Luke 15:1-7

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Notice the central conflict going on in this passage. What is the issue?

Luke 15:1-7

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Why were the people muttering? What was their concern about Jesus? How does his parable answer their accusation? Who does the shepherd represent? The sheep? What does the shepherd do when he finds his sheep? How does heaven respond?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Confess to God any ways that you mutter like the Pharisees.
- Thank God that he is the Good Shepherd who goes after his sheep.

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day TEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Luke 15:8-10

Look for what you learn about God and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you through the Word of God. Compare this parable with the one we read yesterday.

Luke 15:8–10

⁸ "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

How is this parable like and unlike the previous one about the sheep? What point are both making in response to the accusation against Jesus? What effort does the lady go to? What is the cause of rejoicing? How are the friends involved?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God that he carefully searched for you or is searching for you.

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day ELEVEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Review the memory verse for the week:

¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Luke 15:11-32

How does the third story compare and contrast with the first two?

Luke 15:11–32

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ " 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

Slow down to consider each main character in the story. How is each son lost in his own way? How does the Father respond to each son? What is the main point of all three parables we have read this week?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Confess how you have rebelled against your Father.
- Thank God for loving you even in your sin and welcoming you home with him.
- Confess how you have been resentful like the older brother.
- Pray for lost brothers of either type.
- Pray that you can have the heart of the Father.

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day TWELVE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: 3 John

In this short letter the Apostle John refers to younger believers endearingly as his "children." What gives John great joy?

3 John

¹The elder,

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

²Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. ³It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. ⁷It was for the sake of the Name that they went out,

receiving no help from the pagans. ⁸We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

⁹I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. ¹⁰So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

¹¹Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. ¹²Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

What does John tell his "children" they should do in this letter? How is he instructing them to "walk in truth"?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for dear friends such as Gaius. Thank God for your prayer partner.
- Pray that your children will walk in the truth
- Pray that you will find great joy in seeing others be faithful to Christ.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek Christ's joy?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this passage?

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 1:18**. We are returning to a verse from Philippians, Paul's most joyous letter.

Philippians 1:18

¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

What causes Paul to rejoice? What does he see as important?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for all he has given us in Christ by the Spirit.
- Confess your failure to share Christ.
- Pray that you will share Christ with people.
- Pray that the people of Christ Fellowship will share Christ.
- Pray that talking about Christ will be important to you.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek Christ's joy?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this verse?

Review the memory verse for the week:

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: **Philippians 1:25**

In your own Bible, go back and read the previous few verses to see what Paul is convinced of.

Philippians 1:25

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,

What life purpose does Paul grab hold of? For Paul personally, it's better to be with Christ. That's better by far for all of us. So why do we remain on earth?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Pray that God will show you the purpose of your life.
- Ask God to reveal any lesser purposes that guide your life, any idols?
- Pray for the grace to choose to live for other's progress and joy in the faith.
- Pray that you too will find your joy in helping others find and follow Christ.

JOURNAL

What are you learning as you seek Christ's joy?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this verse?

WEEK THREE

We're starting the final week of 21 Days. What has God been revealing to you through his Word, through prayer and fasting, and through times of worship and fellowship with other believers?

If you've struggled to keep your fast, spend daily time in prayer, or connect with your prayer partner, don't be discouraged. Restart today! God is so full of grace, forgiveness, and mercy. He loves you and wants to spend time with you and meet your every need!

This week's memory verse:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

Day FIFTEEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: 1 Peter 1:3-6

We all go through times of suffering. We can still rejoice, even in the hard times. These verses help show us how.

1 Peter 1:3-6

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day SIXTEEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: 1 Peter 1:7-9

Notice how Peter encourages believers in times of persecution and suffering.

1 Peter 1:7–9

⁷ These (trials) have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you

do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What is one reason that we experience suffering? What fills us with inexpressible joy?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Ask God to give you his perspective on any suffering that you are enduring.
- Pray for more faith to see Christ.
- Pray for greater anticipation of his coming.
- Pray to love Christ more.
- Praise God for the end result of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

JOURNAL

What are you learning you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this passage, by his Spirit?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day SEVENTEEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: James 1:2-4

Notice how James encourages believers who are going through hard times.

James 1:2-4

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day EIGHTEEN

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on these verses today: 2 Corinthians 8:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:6

In two situations with two different groups of Christians, Paul points out that they were able to experience joy in the middle of difficult times. In your own Bible, you might want to read more of the context around each verse.

2 Corinthians 8:2

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing **joy** and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians about the Macedonians who were living in extreme economic poverty and going through a severe trial, yet they overflowed with joy. How can we experience joy in Christ in the middle of severe difficulties?

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the **joy** given by the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote to the Christian in Thessalonica, northern Greece, who were in the middle of what he calls "severe suffering." Where did their joy come from? How does their joy imitate Jesus? How does it imitate Paul?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Ask God to grant you overflowing joy in your severe trials.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the gift of joy in your suffering.
- Pray that you can imitate the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul by living in joy no matter what difficulties you face.

JOURNAL

What are you learning you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you through these verses?

Acts 5:17–42

¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. ²⁰ “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

²¹ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. ²² But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, ²³ “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” ²⁴ On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

²⁵ Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” ²⁶ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

²⁷ The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day TWENTY

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on this passage today: Hebrews 12:1-3

Notice how the author of Hebrews encourages believers to persevere in hard times.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance

the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

How are we to run the race? In what ways is Jesus our example? How does his example inspire us to endure suffering with joy? What was the joy set before Jesus?

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for the great cloud of witnesses.
- Thank Jesus for being the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.
- Thank Jesus for enduring the cross for the joy set before him.
- Pray you will not grow weary and lose heart.

JOURNAL

What are you learning you seek to experience joy in Christ?

What do you sense God is saying to you in this passage?

SHARE

Talk with your prayer partner about what you are learning, how you are growing to experience more joy in Christ. Pray together.

Day TWENTY-ONE

BEGIN

Pray to experience joy in Christ through our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Review the memory verse for the week:

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

READ

Read and meditate on these verses today: A review some of our verses about joy from the 21 Days

Our theme verse:

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Our four memory verses:

I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete. (John 15:11)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

In the same way, I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)

Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (James 1:2)

Two more central verses on joy

“Do not grieve, for the **joy** of the LORD is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great **joy**. (Jude 24)

PRAY

As the Spirit leads, let these themes guide you in your prayer today:

- Thank God for the opportunity to experience joy in Christ.
- Confess your lack of joy as you pray for more joy.
- Praise God who will present us to himself with great joy.
- Pray that the joy of the Lord will be your strength.
- Pray that you will experience Christ’s joy to the full.

JOURNAL

What have you learned as you sought for 21 days to experience joy in Christ?

Write down your top three insights from these 21 days. What are you taking away from this season of seeking to experience joy in Christ? What is one action you will take going forward?
