



EVERLASTING JOY

Introduction

Book of Philippians

I love the title of our series, **Everlasting Joy**. That's what is available to us through faith in Jesus Christ. In the next few weeks, we will be exploring what joy really is, and what it's not. But first I want to explain a little bit about the format of the study if you're new with us. We will be studying one chapter a week and you will be given questions for homework. They aren't broken down into "days" like they used to be, but you can answer them however works best for you, whether it's a few each day, or all in one sitting. A good Bible Study should consist of defining the meaning of key words, looking for themes, finding contrasts and comparisons, cross-referencing other verses, and finding correct application. My goal is to help guide and direct you into studying the Scriptures in a productive way.

Each week you will be asked to observe the text by answering some of the above questions. In your first lesson, we've provided a sheet called "Key Words" for you to write them down each week and keep them all in one place. It's so interesting to look back at the end and see how many the author repeats throughout the whole book!

Each week you will have a memory verse that will summarize the main theme or point of the chapter. I pray that you will take the challenge to memorize them and share them with your group. "Hiding God's Word in

our heart” (Psalm 119:11) is such a great discipline to use as we study. It also helps us retain the main thoughts and ideas of the chapters.

As we prepare to begin, please read the entire book of Philippians through at least once. It’s only 4 chapters! It’s important to get a “Bird’s Eye” view before we start studying chapter by chapter. If you have any questions, your leaders are more than happy to help you in any way they can. As they facilitate their groups, their goal is to create an atmosphere that will allow honest questions, great conversation, and encourage learning and growing together in our understanding of the Word. They may not always have the answers to all your questions, but they are excited to search the Scriptures together with you to find answers!

Before we begin chapter 1, let’s take a brief look at the background of this book. Hopefully this will give you a better understanding of Paul’s purpose for writing to his friends in Philippi.

The City of Philippi

Philippi, originally known as the “Fountain City,” stood at the head of the Aegean Sea. Philip II, (father of Alexander the Great) the King of Macedonia, enlarged the city and named it after himself. F.B. Meyer writes, “Philippi was the scene of the great battle between Brutus and Cassius on the one side, and Octavius and Antony on the other. In commemoration of the decisive victory of imperialism over republicanism, Augustus gave it the dignity and privilege of a Roman colony. In fact, it was a miniature Rome. The Great Ignatian Way passed through it, and as a Roman colony situated on this great thoroughfare, it was flourishing and wealthy.” It was a main overland route between Asia and the West. The colonies were part of the system of fortifications securing the empire against enemies. Philippi wore the unmistakable stamp of Rome. The population consisted of Roman soldiers, retired veterans, etc. There were very few Asians and even fewer Jews because it was a military town. Because of this, there were no synagogues in Philippi.

Why was Paul in Philippi?

Paul received his call from God to go to Macedonia in a vision. The Gospel had not yet been taken to Europe, and it was time to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout the world. You can read about Paul’s first exciting, action-packed visit to Philippi in **Acts 15:36-16:40**.

To Whom was the letter written?

Paul wrote to the believers and the leaders in the church that was established in Philippi in Lydia's home. The letter was written in about AD 62, approximately 10 years after he evangelized Philippi. It was written from a prison in Rome where Paul was awaiting trial. He was under house arrest, chained 24/7 by his wrist to a Roman guard.

Why was it written?

Paul wrote this letter for a few reasons. First, he wanted to thank the Philippians for the generous gift they sent him by way of Epaphroditus (4:14-16). He also wanted to remind them of the joy that was possible in Christ. Christ is mentioned over forty times. The words "joy" and "rejoicing" are used 16 times in this letter and found in every chapter. He most likely wanted to give them some gentle guidance, as well as assurance of his well being. It has been said that he wrote them to fill their minds and hearts with the spirit of gladness. You can tell ... he loved them dearly. No strong rebukes or corrections are present, except for an urging to get along with each other. It is the most positive of all Paul's letters, yet it was written while he was in prison. Its tone is warm, positive, and encouraging.

Okay ladies, here we go! Have a great first week of study!