

KNOW JOY

NO MATTER WHAT

WEEK 2 GROUP GUIDE

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

Think of an experience in life where you remember being really humbled. What was that moment like and what did you learn from it? *(Examples: Sports, most embarrassing moment, a situation you underestimated, etc.)*

SHARE

Look around; life has its ups and downs. We can all agree that some days are better than others.

Some days are just terrific ... the sun is shining, we get that front parking spot, that relationship is getting better, our favorite show is coming on and we have no distractions, the boss tells us we are doing a great job, we have on a pair of new shoes and our kids go to bed without a hassle. These are those things that can make us feel happy. Then there are those difficult days, where it's raining and you have to park a football field away from the mall, you get that irritating text about a situation that is out of your control, maybe that health set-back just continues to get worse, that relationship just continues to be an outright pain, and that area of your life you felt was getting better just got worse. These are the difficulties that can make us feel down and frustrated.

Now imagine, whether life is good and the sun is shining or life is difficult and unrelenting ... that you have an incredible strength on the inside that doesn't waiver. You have this secret weapon called "joy." Joy is not dependent on a new pair of shoes or a raise at work. Joy does not shrivel up when we experience the hardships of life. This kind of inner strength comes from God alone. In Nehemiah 8:10 it says, "... the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Throughout this series, we are going to look at what it means to "Know Joy," no matter what. No matter what happens in life, we can truly know joy at all times. As a church, we are going to walk through the book of Philippians. We are going to get to know the Apostle Paul and listen to what God has to say to us about living a life with a true inner joy.

This week we continue in our series on Philippians. This was a special weekend in which Red Rocks Church got to hear from some of our campus pastors. As we have been journeying through Philippians, we see that Paul was serious about each and every one of us understanding God's truth when it comes to joy. It is our strength as we follow Christ. So what helps us develop joy, especially when we feel we just don't have it at times? Humility. Being

set free from your own selfishness to serve and lift up others. It's easier to forget your own importance when you are fixed on who is most important.

Jesus showed us exactly what it looks like to be humble.

Let's read Philippians 2:1-4

Give some examples of what it looks like to do something out of “vain conceit” or “selfish ambition.”

Valuing others above oneself does not mean we don't value ourselves. What is the right balance of taking care of ourselves without becoming conceited?

Have you ever had someone go above and beyond to look out for your interests when they didn't have to? If so, how did that impact you?

GROW

In Philippians, Paul stressed that we should have a healthy balance when it comes to our own value and interests. At times we can read Philippians 2 and arrive at some wrong conclusions about making us “nothing.” In no way should we view ourselves as worth nothing. Far from it; because we are so wonderfully created and deeply loved and cared for by God, we can serve others with great joy and look out for the interests of others. We then can see serving people as opportunities to lay aside selfishness and love someone else in the name of Jesus.

Read Philippians 2:5-8

In the New American Commentary on Philippians, we read more in depth on the meaning:

The NIV translation “made himself nothing” captures the spirit of the passage but overlooks many theological discussions of the past. Historically, interpreters have wondered of what did Jesus empty himself? The question shows that a theological interest predominates in the passage. Most modern interpreters, however, point out that the hymn does not speak to that point. The contrasts between “Lord” (v. 11) and “servant,” (v. 7) and “very nature of God” (v. 6) and “human likeness” (v. 7) express the emptying. Thus the emptying is that God became human, Lord became servant, and obedience took him to death. The verb “emptied” (NASB) does not require a knowledge of what was emptied (Rom 4:14; 1 Cor 1:17; 9:15). Often it is translated simply “to render void, of no effect.” This passage affirms simply that Christ left his position, rank, and privilege. They were “of no effect.”¹⁵²

Two ideas modify the verb “made himself nothing.” They are: taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness. These statements explain both how this took place and what it means. Paradoxically, being “made nothing” means adding humanity to deity rather than subtracting deity from his person. The language has a vagueness to it; that vagueness allows for theology which cannot be expressed easily, a theology of the relationships between the divine and human in Christ.

The text is clear that Jesus did not use his position to his own advantage, but used his position to the advantage of others. Jesus selflessly served with a deep joy and was willing to humble himself and be obedient, even if it meant death on a cross. When others would walk by and overlook the hurting, Jesus would stop, engage, love, and heal. When others thought there was no hope for the corrupt and broken, Jesus would seek them out; find them and ask them to follow him. Jesus did not just see people; he saw souls that mattered.

What is the difference between using your position for your own advantage and using your position for the advantage of others? Give some examples.

Jesus was fully deity and fully man, God in the flesh dwelt on this earth. Why is this so significant?

MOVE

Those who humble themselves will be exalted. Throughout scripture, we see God, time and time again; choose to use the humble to do amazing things. In the Bible we read countless stories of humble and unlikely people turning out to have made a Kingdom difference in their generation. Jesus, the ultimate example of humility and service is exalted to the highest place, the name above all names. We now get to follow his example and serve, love, and care for people like the Master.

Read Philippians 2:9-11

What stands in the way for you personally when it comes to cultivating humble heart?

This week, how can you use your position to serve someone you might typically overlook? Tell us about it.

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Hebrews 12:1b-2

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our 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.