

I. Introduction.

II. Rejoice in the Lord always. v. 4

- A. God commands you to be joyful. 3:1 I Thess. 5:16
1. How can Paul tell you to be joyful?
 2. You are responsible for how you feel.
- B. True and lasting joy is found only in the Lord. I Pet. 1:8
1. Any other source of joy will let you down. Pr. 23:4-5
 2. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22f
 3. The Lord is sufficient cause for continual joy. 3:8-10 3:20-21 4:5 Ps. 37:4 16:11 John 15:11 Lu. 1:14 19:37 Acts 8:39 13:48 Rev. 19:6
 4. Paul certainly lived this out. Acts 16:22f Philippians 1:18 2:17-18 II Cor. 11:23f
- C. You are to rejoice *always*. John 16:22 Ro. 8:38-39
1. You can experience godly joy in the midst of trouble. Hab. 3:17-19 II Co. 6:10 Mt. 5:11-12 Col. 1:24 Acts 5:41
 2. If you lack joy, you dishonor the Lord.
 3. Why do Christians lose their joy? Ps. 51:12 Mt. 6:24
- D. How, practical terms, can you rejoice in the Lord?
1. Pursue joyous fellowship with God through the Word and prayer.
 2. Rejoice in particular things about God.
 3. Rejoice in the particular things God does. Phil. 4:10 2:5f II Jo. 1:3-4
 4. Rejoice as you praise and worship Him. Ps. 100:3
 5. Rejoice even in your trials. I Pe. 4:13

III. Be yielding and gentle towards all people. v. 5

- A. How does forbearance relate to joy and peace?
- B. What character quality is Paul encouraging? v. 5a 2:3-4 4:2-3
1. Don't be the kind of person who is always frantically looking out for himself.
 2. Don't be unduly rigorous about secondary matters.
 3. Instead of pursuing your own happiness, focus on the needs of others.
 4. Treat everyone with consideration.
 5. This involves conscious effort.
 6. Our Lord Jesus exemplifies gentle forbearance. 2:5f Mark 10:45 Mt. 11:29
- C. Your motivation is that the Lord is near. v. 5b
1. He is with us now. Heb. 13:5b Mt. 28:20
 2. He is coming soon. 3:20-21 James 5:8 Rev. 1:3 22:10 Heb. 12:2 Luke 12:42-48

IV. Instead of being anxious, pray. v. 6-7.

- A. Never worry. v. 6a Matt. 6:25-34
1. What kinds of things make you anxious?
 2. You are not enslaved to anxiety and fear.
 3. Paul is not encouraging irresponsibility or making light of your troubles. 1:27 II Th. 3:10 II Co. 8:1-2

B. Why is worry sin?

1. Anxiety, like joylessness, dishonors God. Mt. 6:25f
2. Worry is due to a lack of trust in God's sovereignty and goodness. I Cor. 10:13
Isa. 59:1 Luke 10:41 Mt. 10:19
3. Anxiety is self-destructive. Mt. 6:34

C. Instead, turn to God with all your concerns. I Pet. 5:7 Heb. 11:6

1. Prayer. Col. 4:2 Mt. 6:32
2. Supplication. Eph. 6:18 Heb. 5:7 I Pe. 3:12
3. Thanksgiving. Eph. 5:4 Col. 4:2 I Ti. 2:1f Rom. 1:21 Phil. 1:12-17 2:17-18
4. Make your requests to God. I Jo. 5:15

D. God's own peace shall guard your hearts and your minds. I Pe. 1:5 John 14:27

1. Notice what Paul doesn't promise.
2. God's own peace is of surpassing value.

V. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. Why should Christians be joyful?
2. How can we be joyful all of the time?
Does this mean Christians will never be sad or mourn?
3. What does a gentle (or forbearing) spirit look like?
4. Why is worry sinful?
5. What is the antidote to worry?
6. List 15 things for which you are most thankful. Pray through the list.
7. How does thankfulness help you to overcome anxiety?
8. Make a list of 5 issues about which you are most prone to worry. Pray through the list.