

# Philippians 4

## Joy

### PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Paul R. Schroeder

## Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:  
A *flipping* clown = **PHILIPPIANS**
2. The CHAPTER:  
The *number* of rings = **CHAPTER 4**
3. The THEME:  
The clown's big smile shows his *joy* = **JOY**

## PHILIPPIANS 4: BACKGROUND

Joy (rejoice) is the key word of this little letter from Paul to the church at Philippi. Paul uses the word 14 times, as he focuses his readers' attention on the need to rejoice. Not only are Christians to have joy in their unity and fellowship (Philippians 1: 3-11), but even during affliction (1:12-30). In other words, they are to have joy always and in all things (4:4, 11).

Paul was not a daydreamer. He knew life. And he knew life has its problems. In fact, he was in prison when he wrote Philippians. His situation was terrible. He would have to have been out of his head to be happy.

But the joy Paul was writing about in his letter was a joy not dependent on circumstances. His life and his daily moods did not rise and fall with the events of the day. He focused beyond his immediate circumstances. He centered his life in Christ. Everything else was secondary. As a result, he found a contentment and peace which transcended the immediate situation. Even in the middle of trouble, he could be at peace (4:11).

This peace and joy passes all understanding. The worldly know nothing about this peace. It is beyond explanation. It is God's gift to his trusting people. It is the result of a heart that has been given its security and stability in Christ. Christ has become all-in-all. No wonder Christians are able to rejoice—the Prince of peace himself is the source of their joy!

## KEY VERSES OF PHILIPPIANS 4

### Verse 4

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

This verse summarizes the theme of rejoicing. Note the imperative language used. It's a command, reinforced by repetition.

### Verse 6

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

True lasting peace cannot be achieved by the artificial means of the world. It will do no good to try escaping life's problems through alcohol or drugs. You won't find peace by blaming others for your problems or by comparing yourself favorably to others whom you consider worse sinners. True lasting peace can come only through faith in Christ. He alone offers the solution: forgiveness, companionship, freedom from fear, and the promise of his guidance and presence in the future.

### Verse 7

**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

God protects your heart and mind. His forgiveness in Christ establishes a solid, secure, peaceful relationship with you.

### Verse 8

**Finally, brothers, 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.**

Christians want to spend their time and energies thinking and meditating on those things which are pleasing to God. (See Colossians 3:2).

### Verses 11-12

**I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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.**

Contentment is a condition of the mind. It is not dependent on circumstances. Its security and stability are in the cross of Christ, where the old self was crucified and a new self was born by union with the risen Christ.

### Verse 13

**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

Nothing is impossible for God. A person who lives in the will of God, awaiting God's timing and guidance, can achieve anything that is God's will.

## Verse 19

**And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

God knows our needs, and he promises to fulfill them abundantly. That's the kind of God he is—gracious and generous.

## THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS 4

### Day 1

Paul found joy in seeing others commit themselves to Christ (Philippians 1: 4-7). It is thrilling to see friends and relatives grow deeper in their faith.

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True joy will become yours as you are patient with others (Philippians 4:5), commit everything to God in prayer (v. 6), and have your heart and mind fixed on Christ (v. 7).

\* \* \*

Unique anxieties and worries rob us of joy. Worry is sin. It's a reflection of our efforts to control the future. It's evidence that we doubt God's promise to care for us. We should repent of our worry. Prayer is an excellent antidote to worry. The opening words of Philippians 4:6 could be paraphrased, "Worry about nothing; pray about everything."

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Christ experienced grief and sorrow when he was here on earth. He wept with those who wept. The joy he offers is not destroyed by grief and sorrow. Joy in him goes beyond that; it trusts God to even turn evil circumstances into blessings in our lives.

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Sad-sack, sourpuss Christians give a terrible witness for our Lord. Their pessimism suggests when the chips are down, that they really don't have anything more to lean on than the world has. On the other hand, a cheerful Christian in the midst of a crisis reveals a trust in the loving God, who rules and governs all things and has not lost control.

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David was often troubled when he lost his focus on God. When he regained a correct perspective (repented), his joy in God returned. Many of David's psalms exalt God and joyfully shout praises.

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Your joy will be in direct proportion to your repentance. There can be no joy while you explain or justify your sin, since there is no repentance then. When you repent, the joy comes rushing back in the warm assurance that God has forgiven you. Fear can rob us of joy. We need not fear the future. God is already there.

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## Day 2

Rejoice that God loves you unconditionally. Go to him. He will never turn you away. God's love for you is not based on your lovability, but upon his great unreachable, merciful love for you. So, rejoice. God loves you.

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There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7).

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Guilt robs us of joy. The burdened heart is alienated from God, others, and self. There is only one solution—*repent!* God is waiting with open arms (Luke 15: 11-32). When you are right with God, your joy will return. And, when you are right with yourself, your relationships with others will improve.

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How we think has a great deal to do with how we feel.

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Christ wants his people to be joy-filled (John 15:11). He prays for his people (John 17:20).

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With God, there is hope. Hope brings joy.

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Illness and disease war against joy. We have a Great Physician who heals. Christ demonstrated his healing power throughout his ministry here on earth. He continues to heal today, generally using the human means of doctors and nurses and every beneficial medication that has also come from his merciful hand.

At times God heals directly, without earthly or human means. Most often, he heals by changing self-destructive habits and lifestyles that express the sinful nature. He heals through love and caring. He restores and gives new hope and purpose to life.

At times God chooses not to give bodily healing. His ways are beyond our understanding. His timing is no our timing. His ways are not our ways (Romans 11:33-34).

Be assured that in the resurrection we will be whole. We will have no infirmities, no illness, no disease. We will have perfect spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44). There will be no sin, therefore none of the effects of sin. Come, Lord Jesus!

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### Day 3

Christians should rejoice if they are counted worthy to suffer persecution for Christ (1 Peter 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:10).

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Joy is the result of meditating on the faithfulness of God. He keeps his promises. Remember the joy of Hannah when Samuel was born (1 Samuel 2: 1-10).

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Christ is the focus of true joy. Note the joy of the angelic messengers (Luke 2: 13-14), the shepherds (Luke 2:20), and the Magi (Matthew 2:10).

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Joy comes when you realize that, in Christ, you have power even over Satan (Luke 10:17).

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One of the purposes of Scripture was for the fulfilling of joy (1 John 1:4).

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Moderation, as the scriptures teach us, is an aid to joy. Sound lungs, clear brains, and unfrayed nerves will certainly assist joy.

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Giving thanks, based on God's priorities, not the world's helps us be joyful (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Possessions frequently rob us of joy when they begin to possess us. (See Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Timothy 6:10). Cares of this world drain away joy.

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Joy, like other emotions, can be shared. A spirit of joyfulness can be contagious.

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Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It is not self-produced. It comes from God.

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God loves a cheerful (hilarious) giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

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Freedom brings joy. In Christ, we are free. (See Key Chapter booklet *Galatians 5: Freedom*).

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Rejoice always! (Thessalonians 5:16)

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God created the world for our pleasure and happiness. Sin destroys joy. Forgiveness restores joy.

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#### **Day 4**

Joy is best when it is shared. Selfishness and joy are not partners.

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Pleasures of the flesh and joy in the Spirit are total opposites.

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As joyful as our life here may be, the greatest prospect of joy is still to come.

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“There is a room in Rome that is filled with the busts of the emperors. I have looked at their heads; they look like a collection of prize-fighters and murderers. Brutal passions and cruel thoughts deprived the lords of Rome of all chances of joy. Turn now to the poor hunted Christian, and read the inscriptions left by them in the catacombs; they are so calm and peaceful that they say instinctively, ‘A joyous people were wont to gather here’” (C.H. Spurgeon).

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Christians sing not only when the sun shines but also during the storms.  
Joy devours problems.

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Worldly joys destroy; spiritual joy builds up. Worldly joys are flawed by guilt; spiritual joy is pure. Worldly joys are external; spiritual joy is internal. Worldly joys are temporal; spiritual joy is eternal.

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Nehemiah 8:10: Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

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Jeremiah 31:13: I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.

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

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Of all God’s creation, it seems that man alone can laugh.

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Matthew 5:4: blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

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The Thessalonians were enduring severe suffering, yet they had joy. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe sufferings, you welcomed the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6).



## Day 5

As care leaves, joy comes. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

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He who can calm a storm can also calm your troubled breast (see mark 4: 35-41).

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1 Corinthians 2: 9-10: However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The blessings and joys of eternal life are far beyond our understanding.

\* \* \*

When you suffer for Christ’s sake, rejoice. But rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of god; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (1 Peter 4: 13-19).

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Jude 24: To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. God is our strength.

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Psalm 16:11: You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasure at your right hand.

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When everything goes wrong, praise God anyhow, for his is good and forgiving. You will be uplifted by praise and then you will be able to rejoice always.