

I. Introduction: Real joy is only possible when we learn to rejoice in Jesus.

II. How to Have Real Joy

A. Be On Guard

B. Find New Reasons

C. Forfeit Old Reasons

III. Conclusion: In order to have real, constant, unchanging joy, we have to guard the joy that's already ours in Christ. We have to forfeit old reasons for joy, and we have to find new reasons.

Study Questions: How to Have Real Joy

1. God wants His children to have constant, unchanging joy in Jesus. It honestly seems unrealistic. Do you really believe this is possible? Why or why not?
2. In verse 1, Paul says to rejoice in Jesus. What about Jesus should give us joy?
3. This passage is all about rejoicing in two things: knowing Jesus personally, and being accepted by God because of the finished work of the cross. Why should this give us constant, unchanging joy?
4. In verse 2, Paul says to “be on guard” from people who will tell you that you have to earn your salvation by working for it. What exactly do we have to guard?
5. Paul is saying that we have to guard our joy, by protecting ourselves from the lie that we need to work for something God gives to us freely. What happens when we try working for the salvation, joy, and confidence that we already have in Jesus?
6. Do you ever feel like you need to serve God more and do more of the right things to be accepted and loved by God? Why is this wrong?
7. In verses 4-7, Paul lists all of his old reasons for confidence and joy. And they centered around himself. Are these good reasons for joy and confidence? Why?
8. According to these verses, what did Paul do with his old reasons?
9. According to verses 7-9, Paul got rid of his old reasons for confidence and joy, in order to gain Christ. What does it mean to gain Christ? Why do we want to gain Him?
10. In verse 8, Paul gained new reasons for confidence by “suffering the loss” of his old reasons. We also need to suffer the loss and get rid of old reasons for value, joy, confidence etc. What are some old reasons you personally feel God telling you to get rid of and let go of?