



# CHRISTIAN JOY

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### Lesson 1

## JOY IN SUFFERING (Christ the Master)

### NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Although God's ways may seem mysterious, they are always best. The Apostle Paul found this to be so. He had a keen desire to go to Rome. He wanted to preach the Gospel there on the streets, or maybe even in the great Coliseum. He did get to Rome. However, instead of preaching to crowds, he preached to one's and two's in jail.

Those who visited him heard the Gospel. So did the soldiers who guarded him. In turn, they shared it with others so that some even in the palace received the Saviour. (See Philippians 4:22.)

For our sakes, it is good Paul had those years as a prisoner. During that time he wrote several New Testament books.

One of them, the book of Philippians, is the subject of our study in this series. The church at Philippi had sent gifts to Paul. (See Philippians 4:18.) In response, he wrote a thank you letter—the Philippian epistle. Philippians is filled with expressions of joy and rejoicing. (See, for example, 1:4, 18, 25, 26; 2:2, 16-18, 28; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4, 10.)

Paul could have been disheartened since his own plans had been reversed. However, because Christ was his Master, his example, his prize, his strength, Paul had joy—fullness of joy. God wants you, teacher, and your pupils to experience this same joy.

**Scripture to be studied:** Philippians 1:1-30; Acts 16:12-40

**The aim of the lesson:** To show that it is possible for Christians to have joy, even in suffering.

**What your students should know:** They can have joy in suffering by trusting God completely. Because He is Master, His way is always best. (See Psalm 18:30; Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:28.)

**What your students should feel:** Gratitude for the joy God gives His own even in times of trial.

**What your saved students should do:** Determine to do something kind to the person who has caused them to suffer.

**Lesson outline (For the teacher's and students' notebooks):**

1. Suffering for doing good: Joy in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:10-40).
2. Suffering for testifying: Joy in a Roman jail (Philippians 1:12-18; Acts 24:11-15; 28:16-31).
3. Death does not mean suffering (Philippians 1:19-26).
4. Christians are appointed to suffer (Philippians 1:27-30).

**The verse to be memorized:**

*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.* (Philippians 4:4)

### THE LESSON

Let's start today by naming some things that make us happy. I would be happy if I had . . . (Teacher: Name something you

would like to have.) What would make *you* happy?

(Let your class name a number of things. If possible, list them on a chalk board under the title *Happy*.)

The book which we begin studying today was written by the Apostle Paul when he had none of these things. His home was a prison. His companions were Roman soldiers to whom he was chained. There was the possibility of his being put to death at any time. (Teacher: Show that Paul had none of the items in the *Happy* list.) Even though he did not have that which makes us happy, Paul had joy. We may need things to make us happy. But we can have joy inside, even if we have nothing. For joy, like love and peace, comes from the Holy Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22-23.)

The Philippians were delighted when Paul's letter came. Who do you suppose was present when it was read? What were their thoughts? What did they say? We do not know, but it may have been like this: The whole assembly smiled when they heard the words: "I thank God every time I remember you who are in Philippi. I pray for you with joy, remembering how we worked together in the Gospel from the first day until now." (See Philippians 1:4-5.)



That pleased all the Philippians. About ten years had passed since Paul was in their city. Much had happened since then. Still Paul had joy when he prayed for them, remembering his Gospel work with them.

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