



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

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Series: Philippians

The Joy Leverage: Study of Philippians
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Joy Leverage: Study of Philippians

- We are in the wonderful joyful book of Philippians.
- Paul is writing from prison in Rome to the church he loves deeply.
- Philippians is almost like a person journal on How to Live above your Circumstances with Joy.
- Philippians is a Manifesto on Joy.
- We are using the leverage and fulcrum as a metaphor of how we experience joy.
- Last week I spoke of **Leverage Point #1: Love Relationship with Jesus Christ**.
 - Intimate, daily and practical.
 - Falling in love with Jesus.
 - It is all about relationship, growing in our relationship with Christ.
 - When you become a bondsman of Christ you are the most free of all.

Philippians 1:3-8

³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; ⁷just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. ⁸For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

Leverage Point #2: Heart-to-Heart Connection

- Paul loves the Philippians and this letter brims with connection.
- Connection is why we are here.
- We are hardwired for connection.
- All the research out there in sociology, neuroscience and theology confirms this.
- Even the most introverted person longs for connection.
- God put this desire in our heart.
- It is what gives purpose and joy.
- It is what gives us meaning in our lives.
- Without deep connection there is suffering.
- Without deep connection we suffer physical, psychological and neurological pain.
- Joy comes through connection, so the question is what steals our joy and how do we feel disconnected to people?

But the Enemy of our souls, Satan, comes to steal your joy through stealing your connection.

The Top 3 Joy Suckers of All Time

1. Loneliness and Isolation

- The neuroscience researcher John Cacioppo of the University of Chicago has been studying loneliness for over 20 years. He defines loneliness as “perceived social isolation.” We feel loneliness when experience disconnection.

- At the heart of loneliness is a lack of heart-to-heart connection with some people.
- I am not talking about the people that you have relationship with but rather lack of intimacy, deep trusting relationships: heart-to-heart.
- Dr. Cacioppo's research shows that we do not derive strength from rugged individualism but rather from collective ability to plan, communicate and work together.
- Our neural, hormonal and genetic make-up support interdependence over independence.
- He explains, "To grow into adulthood as a social species, including humans, is not to become autonomous and solitary, it's to become the one on whom others can depend. Whether we know it or not, our brain and biology have been shaped to favor this outcome."
- We are wired for belonging. Joy comes when we have heart-to-heart, meaningful, caring and loving relationships in our life.
- Hunger is a warning that our blood sugar is low and we need to eat. Thirst warns us that we need to drink to avoid dehydration. Pain alerts us to potential tissue damage. And loneliness tells us that we need social connection—something as critical to our well-being as food and water. He explains, "Denying you feel lonely makes no more sense than denying you feel hunger."
- For example, living with air pollution increases your odds of dying early by 5%. Living with obesity, 20%. Excessive drinking, 30%. And living with loneliness? It increases our odds of dying early by 45%.

2. Fear of Vulnerability

- Fear of getting hurt. Fear of of the pain of disconnection.
- Fear of criticism and failure.
- Fear of not measuring up.

- Fear of the future and what could happen, especially to our loved ones. We fear and cannot experience joy, because every time it comes we are flooded with fear of what could happen. We are afraid to enjoy the moment because we immediately go to the fears. It is almost like if we let the joy come, it will hurt too much when we lose it.
- Terrorism is time released fear.
- We are living in a fearful time and some of us have internalized fear to the extent that we just cannot experience God's power and joy in our lives.

3. Scarcity of Safety and Uncertainty

- These are anxious and fearful times, both of which breed scarcity.
- We are afraid we will lose what we love the most and we hate that there are no guarantees.
- We are a nation hungry for more joy because we are starving for safety and security.
- We are a people that never have enough because we live a life of thinking there will never be enough.
 - Our first waking thought is "I did not get enough sleep."
 - We do not have enough money for that.
 - Our kids are not good enough at sports, at school, in cleaning their rooms.
 - We do not get enough exercise.
 - We are not smart enough, educated enough, successful enough.
 - So, by the time we get back to bed at night we have lost any semblance of joy because of our scarcity mentality.

Paul addresses these joy suckers in his letter. Paul addresses this in his opening paragraph. Let's see the supernatural insight from the Holy Spirit writing this letter through Paul.

Heart-to-Heart Connection!

Philippians 1: 3-4

³I thank my God for upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy

Paul is grateful; Paul is thankful and it is with joy.

- Joy flows out of gratitude! We break the spirit of scarcity, fear and loneliness by being grateful!
- Paul is wholehearted and people who are wholehearted are practicing gratitude.
- I have used the term “attitude of gratitude” but I have since learned that it is not just an attitude but a practice. You have to practice gratitude in your life.
- For example, I can have an attitude of being a winner or of being happy but that does not always translate into being a winner or being happy. It is a practice; it is what we do.
- Paul is practicing gratitude through remembering the heart-to-heart relationships he has cultivated in Philippi.
 - He remembers the people there—the times of conversations, laughter and tears together.
- But Paul also practicing gratitude through his prayers. He says that he is “always in every prayer” making mention with joy and gratitude.
- Wholehearted people practice gratitude through:
 - Writing down in a journal what you are thankful for.
 - Telling your loved ones how much they mean to you.
 - Creating a gratitude atmosphere by asking questions to your friends, “what are you most thankful for?”

Philippians 1: 5

For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now

Paul has heart-to-heart connection through a common cause.

- The word “fellowship” is koinonia which means communion. A heart-to-heart connection, joint participation in something.
- Paul had a heart-to-heart connection, fellowship through the common bond and mission of the Gospel.
- **Acts 16**

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” 18 And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs

which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” ²²*Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.* ²³*And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.* ²⁴*Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.*

The Philippian Jailer Saved

²⁵*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.* ²⁶*Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.* ²⁷*And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.* ²⁸*But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”*

²⁹*Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.* ³⁰*And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*

³¹*So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”* ³²*Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.* ³³*And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.* ³⁴*Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.*

- For example, in the same way, when you start serving the Lord with others, you begin to have a new level of heart-to-heart connection with each other.
 - Ask The Road people who have gone to Mexico, participated in the Springs Initiative or serving our children and our youth.

- Trip to Houston to help with Hurricane Harvey.
 - Serving and working on the Road campus to make it beautiful.
 - “More than a Meal” goes down and feeds the homeless.
- Fellowship, koinonia in the Gospel of loving others brings joy!

Philippians 1:6

being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

Paul is confident of the future

- Rather than the joy suckers of loneliness, isolation, fear and scarcity, Paul is pumped about the future—he is full of optimism, joy and faith!
- Paul is in prison; Paul has been beaten; Paul could hear on any day that he’s going to be executed, yet he says in verse 6.

“being confident of this very thing that He who begun a good work in you will complete it”

- Paul is confident of good things to come. He not only does not have a scarcity mindset, he has an abundance mindset. He is expecting good things, miraculous things to come.
- “Good” means in the Greek, benefits—physical and moral. The word is used for people, things, acts and conditions. In other words agathos means he is expecting good in all areas of their life.
- We counter these fears with courage. Wholehearted disciples are people of courage.

Philippians 1:7-8

⁷just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

⁸For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

Heart-to-heart connection is only possible through the affection of Jesus Christ flowing in our lives.

- Paul loves the Philippians with “the affection of Jesus Christ.”

- This word “affection” means “bowels.” This means it was a love not channeled through Christ, but rather, channeled through us, through our inner heart connection.

- **Romans 5:5 “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”**

- This is the “spiritual lubrication” that keeps our heart loving! The affection of Christ is the oil in our relationships.

- Paul uses the phrase “you all” 9 times in this letter. Where I come from we would say “ya’ll.” But Paul didn’t want to leave anyone out.
 - This affection had grown through being in suffering together. When you go through suffering with someone it binds you together.
 - This was an affection, based in suffering and pain.

- The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, begins with “Love, joy, peace...” Christians who practice love experience joy!

Leverage Joy in your life through Heart-to-Heart Connection

- Start or join a D Group.
- Next week, hang out meet some people watch the movie with us “Triggered too.”
- Come to The Road Map Brunch after the service on Feb. 18th.
- Men, join us for “Men’s Morning Fire” every Tuesday morning 6-7am.