CHARIS YOUTH

Series: If You're Happy and You Know It

Lesson 1: Be Thankful and Bold: Philippians 1

About This Lesson

The book of Philippians is known as the "Epistle of Joy" in the Bible because it uses the words "joy" and "rejoice" over a dozen times. This series takes an expository look at the book of Philippians to show young people how to study a book and examine verses in context. This lesson focuses on what happiness is, the power of being thankful, living for Jesus, being bold, and conducting yourself well.

Key Takeaway: You choose whether you have joy and rejoice or not—choose joy at all times!

Key Verse: Psalm 144:15 *Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!*

Teaching Outline:

I. HAPPINESS IS GOD'S IDEA

Psalm 144:15 *Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!*

A. God's people are happy, not worried, fearful, distraught, overcome, confused, or depressed.

1. The number one thing the devil tries to do is steal your joy! If he can steal your joy, he will steal your strength, and you will be vulnerable to his attacks.
   Nehemiah 8:10 *The joy of the LORD is your strength.*

2. The deceiver uses these joy stealers:
   a. LACK – gets you worried about scarcity vs. abundance mindset. No devil, I do not lack because *"My God shall supply all my need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19).

b. MISTREATED and OFFENDED– focuses on how you've been mistreated. Now it's time to be offended. No devil, I won't be offended because God is my defender!!!!
Hebrews 12:15 *Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.*

II. BE THANKFUL: PHILLIPIANS 1:1-11

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 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; 7 just 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. 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

A. Thankful people remember the good (verse 3).
   1. When someone thinks of you, it should bless them!
   2. Live to be a blessing to others!

B. Thankful people pray (v. 4).
   1. Be a person of prayer.
   2. Prayer puts your focus on God and reminds you of His divine plan for your life.

C. Thankful people know it's not over yet (v. 6).
   1. God is still working in you! If you are still on this earth and breathing, there is a God-given purpose for you being here.

2. You are not an accident. You might not be perfect, but God can still use you!
3. God's not done with the people you love and care for either!
4. Keep looking ahead. As a believer, you have a lot to look forward to!
5. The greatest thing we have to look forward to is JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

D. Thankful people are partakers of grace—the grace of giving (v. 7).
   1. Be a giver and partner with ministries and churches that are doing work for the kingdom of God! It's exciting to be a part of something big! Build relationships with others who are saving, healing, delivering, discipling, equipping, and sending people out as laborers for the harvest!
   2. Live beyond your individual self! Living only for yourself will make you miserable because we are created for relationships. No man is an island!
   3. Help those around you! You have a sphere of influence. Be a shining light for Jesus wherever you are, shine towards your family, friends, neighborhood, community, workplace, and school.

E. Thankful people let their love abound more and more (v. 9).
   1. Keep loving more and more, which takes both knowledge and discernment.

F. Thankful people are sincere and fruitful people (vv. 10–11).
   1. Avoid offense. Don't cause it, and don't receive it.

III. LIVE FOR JESUS: PHILLIPIANS 1:12-18

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, [13] so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; [14] and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15] Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: [16] The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; [17] but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. [18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

A. God can turn things around (v. 12).

1. In the Old Testament, Joseph realized this. His brothers sold him into slavery, but what the enemy meant for evil—God turned it around! Joseph kept being a person of faith as God turned the situation around! Don't give up on God. He's going to turn things around!
2. If you are living for Jesus and for His glory, God will see you, take care of you, promote you, and give you favor, and His face will shine on you and through you.
3. God wants to show Himself strong. He wants to do extraordinary things for those who live for Him (2 Chronicles 16:9).

B. Look at the good side of things (vv. 13–14).
   1. Even the palace guard received the Gospel! God is unstoppable! When you are living for Him, you are unstoppable. Despite the circumstances, your happiness, purpose, and destiny are unstoppable.
   2. Boldness is a trademark of an apostle!

C. Living for Jesus causes you to be the ultimate optimist (vv. 15–18).
   1. Your happiness will seem absurd to some. With Jesus, there is only one way to go—UP!

IV. BE BOLD: PHILLIPIANS 1:19-26

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [20] according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. [21] For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. [24] Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. [25] And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, [26] that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

A. If you want to be happy, be bold (vv.19–20).
   1. Don't take everything or yourself so seriously. Be so bold that, whether you live or die, Jesus is everything, and you have everything to gain!
   2. The lion of the tribe of Judah is inside of you. Don't live like there's a scared kitty cat inside of you. There's a roaring lion on the inside of you!

B. Live boldly by looking ahead and looking to Jesus (v. 25).

1. Faith gives you joy!
2. Live and make choices based on faith, not on fear.

V. CONDUCT YOURSELF WELL: PHILLPIANS 1:27-30

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, [28] and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. [29] For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, [30] having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

A. How to be happy: conduct yourself well and strive for peace and unity (v. 27).
   1. Don't sin. Sin will make you miserable. Jesus wants you to be happy!
   2. Make peace a priority and work for a common goal.

B. Don't be terrified by your adversaries (v. 28).
   1. You are different from the world. You should think, talk, and act differently.
   2. Don't be terrified. Keep living from the supernatural joy Jesus gave you!

Bottom Line:
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands, be thankful, and live for Jesus. Be bold, and conduct yourself well.

Small Group Time:

1. Philippians is the greatest sermon on joy written by Paul while he was in prison for preaching. His secret was that his joy was in Christ, not his circumstances. If your joy comes from the world, the world can take it away. When your joy comes from Jesus, the world cannot take it away!

- Who do you consider a happy person? What do you think is their source of happiness?
- Are you typically a happy person? Why or why not?
- Is it possible for you to stay full of joy for an hour? A day? A week?

2. In Philippians 1, verses 12–18, Paul focuses on the importance of preaching about Christ. His life goal was to preach and make the Gospel message known to everyone, everywhere he went.

- On a scale of 1 (low)–10 (high), how important to you is telling people about Jesus? Explain your reasoning.
- What can you do this week to share the Gospel with someone?

Declaration:
"I choose to be thankful and bold as I live rejoicing at all times."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** How can you rejoice in any circumstance?
- **Pray:** Ask God to show you how to have joy no matter what comes at you during the day.
- **Read:** Read Philippians 1 each day and write down new revelations the Holy Spirit shows you.
- **Live It:** Stop living with your happiness depending on something in the future, indicated by "I'll be happy when…" statements. Choose to make statements that reflect a thankful heart that rejoices in God's blessings. Make "I'm happy now because…" statements.
- **Create:** Make a collage of key words, verses, thoughts, or examples of living out Philippians 1. You might want to keep this by your Bible and add things as you read the chapter each day.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you were a season, which season would you be, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Get everyone thinking about joy by playing this warm-up game. Have everyone gather in an open area. Toss a beach ball, and have everyone work together to keep it in the air. Each person who hits the ball up must call out something that makes them joyful. See how long the group can keep the ball in the air without repeating something.

Opening Affirmation: "I choose to be thankful and bold as I live rejoicing at all times in unity with other believers."

Giving Time: Philippians 1:3–5 *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,* [4] *always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,* [5] *for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.*

In verse 5, the word "fellowship" is the Greek word *koinonia*, meaning "partnership." Paul was thankful for the financial partnership from the Philippian Christians. Think of all the things Paul accomplished through the help of his ministry partners. When you give to ministries that do God's work, you are partners with them in their work. Don't waste your money on things that don't last; you can partner with God's work and receive God's rewards.

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: This week, invite the young people to make a "bold faith" pledge to live their faith like Paul. Have them keep track of the ways they choose to be bold and share their faith, or make a decision that honors God rather than pleasing themselves or their peers. Next week, ask them to share with the group as encouragement to make this a lifestyle choice.

Biblical Worldview: Being thankful and bold isn't the norm among today's youth. By following the book of Philippians, the young people can use their biblical worldview to show their peers a different approach to life that brings joy into situations that could be meltdown opportunities. Encourage the youth to practice daily joy choices and boldly give glory to God!

Outreach/Missions: Paul knew that living meant he could tell people about Jesus, but if he died, he would be with Jesus. Christians face persecution in many places around the world. In some countries, when a person says "yes" to Jesus, it could easily mean they are put to death for their faith. Help the young people grasp the commitment to Jesus these believers face as they are persecuted and challenged to denounce their acceptance of salvation. Spend time praying for believers around the world to live their faith boldly, rejoicing that Jesus is their Savior, no matter what happens.