



INGman 12

Focused Living Ministries

“REJOICE!”

Philippians 4:1-23

If you put a **buzzard** in a 6x8 ft cage which is open at the top it will remain a prisoner because it needs a 12 ft running start before it can fly. The remarkably nimble **bat** must have elevation before it can take off, so if placed on a level surface it will shuffle helplessly about until it climbs to reach an elevation from which it can launch itself into the air. If a **bumblebee** is placed in an open jar it often persists in finding a way out through the sides or bottom until it dies as it rarely sees the means of escape at the top. **People** are like buzzards, bats and bees. We scramble and struggle with all our problems/frustrations, never realizing that all we have to do is **look up** to Christ in order to experience joy, freedom, peace and purpose. In sorrow we look back, in worry we look around, in fear we look down, but only by faith in God's solid character will we ever look up and to be free. **Where do men often look for joy and freedom? Why? Does it work?**

(4:4; 2:18; 3:1) Joy is not a feeling, it is a decision. It is a character trait of the heart when we decide to walk with God rather than whine about our circumstances. Joy is not driven by personality nor is it automatic. Joy is permanent and based on God's character. Happiness is temporary and built on circumstances. Happiness is depends on what we **do** or what we have (position, power, performance, possessions). Joy (*chara*) depends on the grace (*charis*) of what God has already **done** for us through Christ (salvation, transformation, forgiveness, grace) at the Cross! Joy is not the absence of suffering but the presence of the Lord. INGmen don't have the best of everything, but they understand that God has given them the best of Himself in Christ! What are some specific ways we can tell if we are seeking happiness or joy?

In this passage the Lord warns His INGmen of several **joy stealers**. What are they? Where do you see them in your life? Why do they tend to erode or destroy the joy in our lives? With which do you struggle?

(4:1-4; John 17:11, 13, 22, 23) _____
How does worry/anxiety specifically affect your **FAITH** and ability to “stand firm in the Lord” ?

(4:6-7) _____
Worry = ‘merimnao’ (meridian) meaning to divide/strangle. **Worry** takes you away from the Lord. **Concern** draws you to the Lord. Why is thankful prayer the 1st step destroy worry/anxiety? Mt 6:25-34



(4:8) _____ Growth/maturity starts with a transformed **mind** (Rom 8:5-8; 12:2; I Cor 2:16; Col 3:1-2). God commands us to “*dwell on these things.*” (*Logizamai*: ‘logic’ and ‘logarithm’). How does worry affect your ability to think clearly?

(4:9) _____ Unapplied truth is as useful as an uncashed check. Jesus challenged His men to live His truth (Luke 6:46-49; II Tim 2:1-2; 15). How does this kill your peace?

(4:11-12; 19) _____ More is never enough because we look for satisfaction apart from God.

(4:13) _____ The parable of the glove!

TAG TEAM Joy is experienced as we get our eyes off circumstances and onto God's character. What principles in the following passages will restore the joy in our lives?
(Psalm 51:4, 10-12, 17)

(John 15:10-13)

(Rom 15:13)

(James 1:2-8)

(I Peter 1:3-8)

(Jude 1:24)

(John 16:20-22)