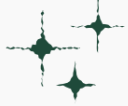
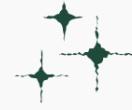


CHOOSE



JOY



THIS MONTH'S THEME: JOY

DECEMBER MEMORY VERSE

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

• **Philippians 4:4**

DECEMBER CHALLENGE VERSE

Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

• **Nehemiah 8:10**

DECEMBER 15 - LIFE APPLICATION

Instead of complaining, rejoice in all things!

NOTE TO PARENTS

During December, we will be learning about the joy that comes from believing in Jesus and having faith in Him. Please read the scripture and listen to the sermon, in person or online, before discussing with your family. This week, we will study **Philippians 4:4** - just one verse, but a powerful one.

Discuss Philippians 4:4

Paul is in prison in Rome around 44 AD. He is under house arrest awaiting trial by the Roman emperor, Nero.

1. Paul was under house arrest for telling the good news about Jesus. **What do you think it means to be under house arrest?** *(He was confined to his home, and not able to leave. Most importantly, he couldn't go out and preach the good news about Jesus!)*
2. Even though Paul was imprisoned and not allowed to go out to share the good news, he was able to write letters and have them delivered to the Christian churches, to encourage them and give them words of wisdom. His friends then traveled to the towns and cities and delivered Paul's letters. **In verse 4, in one word, what did Paul want the believers to do?** *(Rejoice!)*
3. When we face trials, we always have a choice. No matter what the situation, we can choose to complain and be bitter, or we can **choose to _____** *(fill in the blank)*. Paul knew the power of praise. Therefore, he chose to have joy in his heart, no matter what.
4. Next, we are told to **"rejoice in the _____."** *(Rejoice in the Lord.)* **What do you think this means?** *(We rejoice in our deep and abiding faith in Jesus. We know that he is with us no matter what we are going through - whether we are in prison or being persecuted, and when we don't know what the future will bring. He is with us in all things.)*
5. **According to Paul, how often should we rejoice in the Lord?** *(Always!)* Every day and night, no matter what trials come our way, we are to rejoice. To choose to rejoice is the pathway to freedom. **So, is griping and complaining about our circumstances ever okay?** *(No!)*
6. Finally, Paul repeats himself: "I will say it again: Rejoice!" **Why do you think he repeats these words?** Read these words from David Chadwick as he explains the importance of joy and praise!

A word from our pastor, David Chadwick:

Again Paul repeats what he's just said to make sure that people get it. And notice he says, "I **say** rejoice." The praise and joy is to be expressed verbally and outwardly to the Lord and to the circumstance. It's a biblical truth that praise and rejoicing are supposed to be spoken. In our worship songs, but also in simply quoting scripture. And Paul says, "again I say rejoice." He repeats the importance of the choice to rejoice. **I think he's trying to make a point, don't you?**

The entire message is regarding the importance of choosing joy whenever we face difficult times in life. And always!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

In the days before Christmas, instead of being stressed and anxious with all you have to do, practice joy with your family! Here are some ideas:

1. Play Christmas music in your home. Sing Christmas carols together!
2. Plan some fun things to do as a family: go to a movie, play tag football, take a hike on the greenway, or make a day trip somewhere you have never been.
3. Wrap presents together - see who can be the most creative.
4. Play "Secret Santa." Let everyone draw a name of another family member, and do special things for them all through the holidays. On Christmas Eve, "reveal" your identities!
5. Before opening presents, read the story of Jesus' birth together and play "Silent Night" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and other carols. Thank Jesus for coming to earth as a little baby, so that He could teach us about God's love and save us from our sin.

PRAYER

Jesus, we love You. Help us remember not to gripe or complain, but to rejoice in all things and to remember to honor You in all that we say and do. In Your name we pray, Amen.