

ROAD TO JOY: A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

The Joy of Progress, Philippians 1:18-26

LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Philippians 1:18-26. What words or phrases catch your attention? What is the big idea?
2. In verse 18, Paul says, "Yes, I will rejoice." This is the fourth time he's mentioned joy in chapter one of Philippians. In these verses, what are the reasons he gives for his joy?
3. In verse 19, what two factors does Paul list that will help him through his ordeal? Is it surprising to you that Paul lists these two together as interrelated activities? Why or why not?
4. In verses 22-26, Paul describes the tension he is feeling between living and dying. What were the advantages of each option, as Paul describes them?
5. In verse 25, Paul says that he is going to remain on earth for a purpose worthy of investing his life: *your progress and joy in the faith*. The word "faith" here refers to the gospel or good news about Jesus' salvation and kingdom.

In what ways does the gospel – Christian faith – bring us joy? Why does Paul so often refer to the experience of joy in the Christian life? Why is this so foundational to Christian experience?

LIVING THE WORD

6. Verse 21 gives one of the more famous statements in the New Testament: "For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How would you explain the meaning of this verse to a non-Christian at work, at school, or in your neighborhood?
7. How do you know if you are experiencing *progress and joy in the faith*? What does it look like when you are not experiencing these?
8. In these verses, Paul gives several ways that the people of the church are to invest in one another: praying for one another, laboring or working for one another, to stay in relationship, not leaving anyone out, and investing in others' spiritual growth. All of this is for a grand mission: *progress and joy in the faith*.

How does this give you a more robust view for your investment in the lives of others in the church? Have you ever considered that you have a life purpose to *help other people experience progress and joy in the faith*?

9. What is one way you want to live out what you've learned in these verses or through this lesson?