

I. Introduction: Are you stressed out?

II. Rejoice in the Lord always. v. 4

A. God commands you to be joyful. 3:1 I Thess. 5:16

B. True and lasting joy is found only in the Lord.

1. Any other source of joy will let you down. Jer. 17:5-8 Pr. 23:4-5
2. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22f
3. The Lord is sufficient cause for continual joy. Ps. 37:4 John 15:11 1 Pet. 1:8  
Luke 1:14 19:37 Acts 8:39 13:48 Ps. 16:11 Rev. 19:6
4. The joy we have in Christ surpasses any circumstantial difficulty we may have.  
1:18 2:17-18 Acts 16:22f II Cor. 11:23f

C. You are to rejoice *always*. John 16:22 Ro. 8:38-39

1. You can experience godly joy in the midst of trouble. Hab. 3:17-19 II Co. 6:10  
Mt. 5:11-12 Col. 1:24 Acts 5:41
2. Sometimes it is hardest to make God the focus of our joy when circumstances are most favorable.
3. If you lack joy, you dishonor the Lord.
4. Why do Christians lose their joy? Ps. 51:12 Mt. 6:24 Isa. 55:1-2

D. How, practical terms, can you rejoice in the Lord?

1. Pursue joyous fellowship with God through the Word and prayer.
2. Rejoice in particular things about God.
3. Rejoice in the particular things God does. Phil. 4:10 2:5f II Jo. 1:3-4 John 3:29
4. Rejoice as you praise and worship Him. Ps. 100:3
5. Rejoice even in your trials. I Pe. 4:13

E. Jesus was both a man of sorrows and a man of joy. Heb. 12:2 Jo. 15:11 17:14 Is. 62:4

III. Be yielding and gentle towards all others. v. 5

A. How does forbearance relate to joy and peace?

B. What character quality is Paul encouraging? v. 5a 2:3-4

1. Don't be the kind of person who is always frantically looking out for himself.
2. Don't be unduly rigorous about secondary matters.
3. Instead of pursuing your own happiness, focus on the needs of others. 2:3
4. Our Lord Jesus exemplifies gentle forbearance. 2:5f Mark 10:45 Mt. 11:29

C. Your motivation is that the Lord is near. v. 5b

1. He is with us now. Heb. 13:5b Mt. 28:20
2. He is coming soon. 3:20-21 James 5:8 Rev. 1:3 22:10 Heb. 12:2 Luke 12:42-48

IV. Instead of being anxious, pray. v. 6-7

A. Why is worry sinful? v. 6a Matt. 6:25-34

1. Anxiety, like joylessness, dishonors God. Mt. 6:25-34 6:30-32
2. Worry is due to a lack of trust in God's sovereignty and goodness. Isa. 59:1
3. Anxiety is self destructive. Mt. 6:34

- B. Instead turn to God with all your concerns. I Pet. 5:7 Heb. 11:6**
  - 1. Prayer. Col. 4:2**
  - 2. Supplication. Eph. 6:18 Heb. 5:7 I Pe. 3:12**
  - 3. Thanksgiving. Eph. 5:4 Col. 4:2 I Ti. 2:1f Rom. 1:21 Phil. 1:12-17 2:17-18**
  - 4. Make your requests to God. I Jo. 5:15**

**C. God's own peace shall guard your hearts and your minds. I Pe. 1:5 John 14:27**

**V. Deliberately think about profitable things. v. 8**

- A. You are responsible for what goes through your head. Psalm 42:5,11**
- B. Think about these things – true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, praiseworthy.**
- C. Where can such things be found?**

**VI. Put what you have learned into practice. v. 9**

- A. Act upon what you know and believe. Js. 1:22 Mt. 7:24-27**
- B. Follow the good examples you have seen. 3:17 1 Co. 11:1**
- C. Then you will enjoy the closest possible fellowship with the God of peace. Ro. 15:33 16:20 II Co. 13:11 I Th. 5:23 Heb. 13:20**

**VII. Concluding applications: How are you pursuing happiness and peace?**

**Discussion questions**

- 1. Why should Christians be joyful?**
- 2. How can we be joyful all of the time?**
  - Does this mean Christians will never be sad or mourn?**
- 3. What does a gentle (or forbearing) spirit look like?**
- 4. Why is worry sinful?**
- 5. What is the antidote to worry?**
- 6. List 15 things for which you are most thankful.**
- 7. How does thankfulness help you to overcome anxiety?**
- 8. Make a list of five issues about which you are most prone to worry. Pray though the list.**
- 9. List and memorize ten verses which reflect the things about which you should think when you are stressed.**
- 10. Why does putting truth into practice bring peace?**