

Choose Joy (Week 4): Your Joy Plan:

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less



1) In the first three weeks of this series, we touched on quite a few of the major themes about joy in Philippians, but today we turn toward the how-to and the practical.

2) From her 15+ years of research, Dr. Pamela King has discovered these five key components of a joyful life:, all of which you can find in Philippians: a) growing in authenticity, that is, being your true self, b) living into your strengths, c) deepening your relationships, d) contributing to the wellbeing of others, and e) living more aligned with your own core values.

3) A first important pointer about joy is that we need to "see the butterflies": a joyful life is made up of many small joys, not a few big ones strung together.

4) One of the biblical books in which you see this best is Ecclesiastes: over and over, we're told that the greatest joys are the simplest joys, eating, drinking, and finding joy in the everyday and in work, most everything else is vanity (see Eccl. 4.6 and 5.12, for example).

5) Rev. Nancy Collier writes, "Joy is the result of the choice to actively stop, even if just for a moment, and hold in our awareness the small and lovely things of life...The purposeful acknowledgement of joys is indeed joy itself."

6) Pay attention everyday for those joys that are unexpected and not owed to you.

7) Verbalizing your small joys makes them real.

8) Remembering and reliving past small joys increases your capacity for present joy.

9) The warning signs of joylessness can be a) sarcasm, b) judging and shaming others, c) bitterness, skepticism, and pessimism, and d) passing your joylessness to others.

10) Fundamentally, as Dr. Assael Romanelli puts it, in our lives "joy is a verb, not a noun."

Your Joy Plan This Week

By way of reminder, we'll send you a bunch of joy-related resources on Thursday so you can keep exploring and learning as you like.

For today, we'd suggest spending some time this week working on your own personal joy plan:

- What from the four weeks of the series do you want to remember and act on?
- How can you pay more attention to "the butterflies" in your life (that is, small, daily, unexpected, or unowed joy)?
- Spend some time with Dr. Pamela King's list of the key ingredients of a joyful life (see point 2 in the sermon summary above) and figure out how you can prioritize or improve each in your own life going forward.
- Use Philippians 4.8 as a focus for your reflection, journaling, and prayer for the immediate future: teach your eyes to find those pure, just, true, commendable, etc. things that you encounter each day: [Phil 4.8 NRSVA](#)
- Spend the week asking God for how you can live more joyfully, and then pay attention for what God might say in reply. You can also have a conversation about being more joyful with a good friend, your significant other, or even your small group.