

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

In Control, The Wonderful Cross, Still, Waymaker, Since Jesus Came Into My Life

WELCOME

What struggles have you and your loved ones come across the past week? What blessings are you thankful for?

WORD

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

These are, indeed, trying times. We recognize the problems surrounding us, the uncertainties that haunt every family, and even the threats to our own individual health and wellness in a time of pandemic illness. It is harder to speak about JOY amidst the problems we face today. As Christians, however, we must be able to master joyful living – one that is not dependent on our circumstances.

Philippians 2:12-18 gives a timely reminder against one such “killjoy” – GRUMBLING. We can be honest enough to admit that we’ve all probably grumbled in one form or another. The real challenge for us now is to instead hold fast to our true and lasting joy, even in difficulties. For this, we can learn from Paul **four basic principles** that we must apply for us to truly grow in Christlikeness in trying times:

1. BE OBEDIENT

By nature, we are not obedient creatures. That’s why Paul commended the Philippians in Phil. 2:12-13 because they have “always obeyed” when he was around. His admonition though was for them to obey from the heart, even in his absence (for he was in jail when he wrote to them). If they obey from the heart, they will continue to do God’s will. The Old Testament posed this challenge to God’s people (**Deut. 30:19-20**)—the choice to obey or not. The foundation of obedience is love for the Lord. A great encouragement for us is to know that obedience brings blessings! In **Joshua 1:8**, God’s people were reminded to meditate on God’s Word day and night so that they may be able to do according to all that God has commanded them and experience success in all that they do.

Jesus gave a sobering question in **Luke 6:46**: “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do as I say?” It is imperative that Christ-followers be **obedient** to His Word. This includes honoring and submission to authorities installed in God’s wisdom and

sovereignty to govern us. God can override the bad decisions that leaders make, so we must be on our knees asking God to move in our situation according to His will. Today, there are many so-called Christians who appear to be “followers”, but a true Christian will always choose obedience from the heart. No disobedient Christian is joyful, because joy is always found in honoring the will of our Heavenly Master.

2. DO YOUR PART

Paul follows that reminder to obey with the command to “**work out your salvation with fear and trembling**” (**v12**). This means to “bring out and make evident our salvation”, to handle it with care. To fear **displeasing** our Master and the encouragement is to look to Him in reverence, continually pleasing Him in all we say (online and offline) and do. Salvation is a gift given for free– **v13** reminds us that it is **God who is at work in us**, both in the desire (*will*), and the act (*work*) of salvation. Being saved is hundred percent from God, and at the same time, it takes one hundred percent of your energy to put your saving faith into practice. Your efforts are not for you to be saved, because the Bible is clear that our works cannot save us (**Eph. 2:8-9**). But the grace of God should not be abused – our salvation is not a license to do what we want and say what we want. Rather, our obedience to God’s will results in good deeds that are a powerful evidence of our salvation in Christ.

The Bible doesn’t say we become perfect in this world, but there needs to be proof that His love transforms our hearts every day. **Titus 2:11-12** reminds us that the grace of God – something we don’t deserve – should change us to deny our worldly desires and empower us to live sensibly and righteously! The question is: do you really desire to live out a life transformed? It is crucial that the way we live our lives will show others who our true Master is. Are we still slaves to sin or are we bondservants of the Most High? **Work out** your salvation! **1 Timothy 4:7, 15** reminds us

WORD (cont'd)

to practice spiritual discipline in our lives as Christ-committed followers! These include prayer, Bible reading, memorizing Scriptures, accountability and discipleship, worship, etc.

3. DO NOT GRUMBLE

Paul gave out another command: to do all things **WITHOUT GRUMBLING OR DISPUTING (vv. 14-15)**. It's easy to grumble because our selfish nature usually takes the lead, but we are to deny ourselves and the lure of ungodliness, and instead stand firm as God's children. To grow in Christlikeness, you need to do **all things** without grumbling or disputing. For Christians, this command is in the imperative --- **stop grumbling**, because we are to prove that we are children of God, appearing as lights in this dark world. Grumbling leads to dispute, but we are to be blameless and above reproach. Our behavior must be able to show that we are of God. God wants us to grow Christlike in our behavior and character! The Bible is not into denial; it says we are "*in the midst*" of a crooked and perverted world. But we are to be lights in these trying times. Are we being a light to the world? Let us not be like the Israelites who grumbled themselves to judgment (**Numbers 11:1-6, 33-34, 1 Cor. 10:8-10**)! The antidote to grumbling is to be thankful – to count the blessings

God graciously gives us. Even in challenging times, we must take note of what to thank God for. The roof we live under, the food we eat, and even the small things we have that others don't have – these are all reasons to be thankful to God for, and therefore avoid complaining and grumbling!

4. PURSUE ETERNAL VALUE

Paul then gives the Philippians a reminder to hold fast (*tightened grip*) to the word of life (**vv. 16-18**). He wants them to continue being faithful so that when they reach the end (*and see where Paul sees the end – he sees it in God's presence, a proof of his eternal perspective*), Paul will be able to rejoice at the consistency and sturdy faith of the Philippian believers. We are to pursue a life filled with purpose; our eyes fixed on what is eternal. Jude wrote so wonderfully in **Jude 23-25** about our mission to "**snatch others**" from eternal damnation by being **good examples** and winning them to Christ. He continued to emphasize that GOD is the one who is able to keep us from stumbling; and make us blameless with great JOY. In this time full of challenges, disappointments, and frustrations, may we all find joy in the eternal. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, we continue to grow in Him and experience joyful living even in a pandemic.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. Self-Check.** What have you grumbled about recently? How are you in terms of respect and submission to authorities?
- 2. Setting It Right.** Have you forgotten to take an inventory of what you have because of His grace? Share 2-3 the things that you are thankful for in the midst of this pandemic and community quarantine.
- 3. Living It Out.** How can you encourage others in these very challenging times? How will you be an example of Christlikeness in a time of uncertainty, pain and fear?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray online this week with someone you know is particularly challenged in this difficult time. Also take time to pray for the "frontliners", including government servants who are in the battle against this COVID-19 pandemic -- for wisdom, protection and that they will call upon the Lord for their salvation. Share the gospel one-on-one with family, or online with friends and loved ones you cannot be with at this time. Take practical steps to show that you care for others especially at this time.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Wisdom, protection and saving faith for the frontliners and government leaders
- Nations around the world to recognize God as the only one who can end this pandemic

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends