

## Think It Over Going Deeper

# Going Deeper Beyond Sunday

## How to Keep Your Happiness in Your Heart

Phil. 2:12-18

*If you would like to extend this over a week, you can easily do one of the points each day in your devotion.*

*Philippians 2:12-13 “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”*

Life situations change quickly, and the happiness in our hearts can disappear in an instant. In Philippians 2:12-18 Paul explains five ways we lose happiness: fearing we're alone, fighting over small stuff, feeling guilty, forgetting God's promises, and focusing on ourselves.

Happiness begins with God's gift of salvation, but requires us to do our part by practicing the exercises Paul describes. Paul's heart exercises are easy to understand but hard to do, and we'll look at the challenges of doing them in this devotional:

### **OPEN UP IN PRAYER. ASK GOD OPEN YOUR HEART.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (NKJV)*

1. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18. What is the difference between giving thanks *in* everything versus giving thanks *for* everything?

*Philippians 2:14-15a “Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that no one can speak a word of blame against you.”*

2. When people are facing challenges in their lives, in what ways can they relieve their frustration without complaining?
3. Often when we complain or argue, we waste time and energy. What are some other benefits of going through difficult circumstances without grumbling or arguing?

*Philippians 2:17-18 “Your faith makes you offer your lives as a sacrifice in serving God. If I have to offer my own blood as a sacrifice, I will be happy and full of joy. And you should be happy and full of joy with me too!” (NCV)*

4. We can serve God only by using our lives to serve others. What kinds of service can we perform for others in our service to God? What prevents people from serving others?
5. What is the benefit of serving daily and consistently instead of only occasionally such as once a year?
6. In Philippians 2:17-18 Paul states that his sacrifice in serving God will make him happy and full of joy. If we believe that sacrifice in serving others makes us happy, why don't we do it?

*John 14:20 Jesus: “I am in you.”*

*Romans 8:31 “God is for us.” (NIV)*

7. We can't be happy if we're afraid of being alone or abandoned, but it's clear from these verses that we have God's constant support.

What does Jesus "in you" and "for us" look like and feel like in your life?

What should it be like?

8. Meditating on God's Word is one of Paul's antidotes to loss of happiness, but what is the practical meaning of "meditate" in a person's life?

What do we have to do to meditate on God's Word?

*Psalm 119:1-2 "Happy are those who live pure lives, who follow the Lord's teaching, keep his rules, and who try to obey him with their whole heart."*

9. One of the exercises outlined by Paul in Philippians 2:12-18 is to keep our consciences clear.

What specific actions can we take to keep our consciences clear?

What prevents us from taking these actions?