

TRIUMPH in *trials*

How to Find Joy When Life Shakes

TRIUMPH in trials

Life is full of trials—and you can't just wish them away.

From personal health battles to relational conflicts, financial stress, or workplace struggles, trouble finds all of us at some point.

But what if trials didn't have the last word? What if, like the Apostle Paul, you could experience real joy right in the thick of whatever mess you're in?

You can!

And in his series, *Triumph in Trials: How to Find Joy When Life Shakes*, Andrew Farley takes you verse by verse through Paul's joy-filled letter to the Philippians—written from prison of all places—to show you how peace, confidence, and contentment are possible even when life is hard.

This 6-message series will teach you the secret to facing life's toughest challenges with unwavering confidence—and shine the light of Christ within you. You'll discover how to...

- Experience joy, even when your circumstances stay the same
- Replace anxiety with peace that defies explanation
- Share your needs with God and rest in His sufficiency
- Let go of your past and press forward with purpose
- Walk in humility and strength, empowered by Christ within
- Discover the secret to real contentment—no matter what life throws your way

Too often, Christians are told to just “fake it ‘til they make it”—to smile through the pain and pretend everything's fine. But *Triumph in Trials* offers something real: A shift in focus that helps you see God's good work in every situation and experience the affection of Christ for you.

You'll be strengthened in the knowledge that God isn't just helping you cope—He's working in you and through you in every circumstance. And when your focus shifts to Christ in you, even the toughest trials can become a place of victory.

PART 1: Triumph in Trials

Could It Be Yours, Even in Your Mess?

If you've ever felt like life's a mess and you're stuck in the middle of it, imagine being in prison and still finding joy. That's Paul's story in Philippians 1. While most of us would be shouting, "Get me out of here!" Paul's focus is on giving thanks and praying for others. He's not gritting his teeth; he's experiencing legit joy right in the thick of it.

What if you could have that same triumph in trials? It's not about ignoring your circumstances but finding peace and joy in the midst of them. Paul's secret? A shift in focus—seeing God's good work in every situation and experiencing the affection of Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS 1:

1. Read verse 1. What clues does this give us concerning early church leadership?
2. Read verse 2. What does it mean to you to have "grace" and "peace" from God?
3. Read verses 3-5. How does Paul feel about them? How does this give us insight into how God feels about us?
4. Read verse 6. In your opinion, what "good work" is Paul likely referring to here?
5. Read verses 7-8. How can Paul experience "the affection of Christ Jesus" for others? What does this mean for you and what you can experience through Jesus?
6. Read verses 9-11. Love, knowledge, discernment, excellence, sincerity, blamelessness, fruit-bearing: How does all of this happen in a believer's life? Discuss.
7. Read verses 12-14. How did Paul view his imprisonment? What effect did it have on others?
8. Read verses 15-18. What are the two motives for preaching that Paul mentions? What does Paul ultimately conclude about them?

PART 2: Triumph in Trials

What's the Secret to Facing Life (and Death!) with Confidence?

How do you tackle life's toughest challenges with unwavering confidence? Paul's letter to the Philippians reveals the secret. He speaks about prayer, provision, and the sufficiency of God's Spirit living in us. Consider this: "To live is Christ and to die is gain." It's a mindset that turns fear and uncertainty into peace—even when the answer to your prayer might be "no."

Living with such boldness that even the prospect of death doesn't faze you isn't about having all the answers. It's about knowing Jesus as your life and finding joy and progress in Him. And whatever happens, you've got Jesus and a community of believers by your side.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS:

1. Read verse 20. In context, what deep significance can the phrase "as always" have for us?
2. Read verse 21 and react to this statement: "To live is Christ."
3. Read verses 22-24. What frame of mind must a person be in to say these things?
4. Read verse 25. Does your flavor of Christianity bring you "progress" and "joy"? Why or why not?
5. Read verses 27-28. What does Paul want to see most in the Philippians?
6. Read verse 29. What two things have been granted to us as believers? Why is the word "granted" so important here?
7. What do you glean from this passage that you can take into your daily approach to life?

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PART 3: Triumph in Trials

Are You Working Out What God's Working in You?

Ever feel like life's a relentless rollercoaster of ups, downs, and loop-de-loops? What if you could approach each twist with a radically fresh mindset? Philippians 2 doesn't just paint God as a distant helper—it reveals Him as your very life source. In Him, you're not just surviving—you're thriving from a place of unshakable union.

Imagine God at work within you, shaping your desires and actions to align with His purpose. As Christ's mindset pulses through you, confidence in His provision and a genuine concern for others start to flow effortlessly—not as obligations, but as natural expressions of who you already are.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS 2:

1. Read verse 3. How does genuine humility happen? How does humility reflect the heart of the Gospel?
2. Read verses 4-5. How does looking out for the interests of others start to happen in our lives? How can we have this mindset?
3. Read verses 6-8. What does it mean that Christ "emptied Himself"? What do you think God is trying to tell us through this?
4. Read verses 9-11. Why is the exaltation of Christ significant to our understanding of His nature and place in our lives? What does it mean that Jesus is Lord?
5. Read verse 12 and react to this statement: Work out what God has worked in!
6. Read verse 13 and react to this statement: God doesn't just cause us to "do" but also to "will" (or want) what He wants.
7. Read verses 14-16. From a grace perspective, how do we shine as "lights in the world"? And what does it mean to hold fast to the word of life?
8. Read verses 17-18. What does "poured out as a drink offering" mean? How can we share in joy as we encourage and build one another up?

PART 4: Triumph in Trials

Is Your Religious Resume Rubbish?

You've been taught the formula: Work harder, do better, follow the rules... and you'll be okay with God. But let's get real—that's not the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul had it all: Status, a squeaky-clean resume, the best of the best. But in Philippians 3, he calls it all garbage. Why? Because it's worthless next to knowing the treasure of Jesus and His finished work.

Too many people today are still chasing that fake "self-improvement" gospel, believing their worth is tied to what they do instead of what Christ has already done. And no, it's not about waiting for future perfection or "dying to self" like some morbid, self-hating mantra. It's about embracing what we've already attained.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS 3:1-16:

1. Read verse 3. Paul describes true worshippers as those who "put no confidence in the flesh." What does it mean to put confidence in the flesh, and how do people today seek status and worth in worldly ways? What's the solution?
2. Read verses 4-6. Paul lists his impressive credentials under the Law. Why does he bring these up? What false sources of righteousness do people rely on today?
3. Read verses 7-8. Paul says he considers everything loss compared to knowing Christ. How does this perspective change how we view achievements, failures, and identity?
4. Read verse 9. Paul contrasts "a righteousness of my own derived from the Law" with "the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ." How does this verse clarify the Gospel, and why is it important for us to rest in Christ's righteousness?
5. Read verses 10-11 and react to this statement: Knowing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and being conformed to His death is not about "dying to self" but about living in the reality of Christ's finished work and embracing His sufferings (in this fallen world).

6. Read verses 12-13. Paul says he hasn't already "obtained it" or "become perfect." What does he mean? How does this passage encourage us to press forward while also resting in our secure identity in Christ? (Hint: Contrast this with verse 15 which says we are "perfect.")
7. Read verse 14. Paul talks about pressing toward "the prize of the upward call." What is this prize, and how does it differ from the world's idea of success?
8. Read verses 15-16. Paul encourages mature believers to have this mindset. What does maturity look like, and how does it relate to what "we have attained" (verse 16)?

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PART 5: Triumph in Trials

How Do You Rejoice When Life Stinks?

When the world's crashing down, how do you stand firm in the chaos? Is it a smile and a "praise God!"—or something more profound? In this message, I take you through a powerful, raw look at Philippians 3 and 4, where Paul gets REAL about coping with the hard stuff, going deeper than cookie-cutter behavior or the "fake it 'til you make it" approach.

Rejoicing "always" in a world of mess sounds impossible. But what if it's not about your circumstances changing? What if it's about God's love never changing? We'll dive into why an attitude of dependency is key to "standing firm."

And when anxiety hits, what if you could be real with God (no sugar-coating anything!) and experience a peace from Him that defies explanation?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS 3 & 4:

1. Read Philippians 3:17. What is the "pattern" Paul refers to? Consider the words "walk according to" when you give your answer.
2. Read Philippians 3:18-19. Who are the "enemies of the cross of Christ"? What does Paul say about their mindset?
3. Read Philippians 3:20-21. What does it mean that "our citizenship is in heaven"? How can this truth impact how we live today?
4. Read Philippians 4:1. How does knowing the radical truths of the Gospel help us "stand firm" in times of trouble?
5. Read Philippians 4:4. Paul commands believers to rejoice "always." How is this even possible in the face of life's struggles?
6. Read Philippians 4:5. What does "let your gentle spirit be known to all men" mean? What does it say about your spiritual heart? Your nature? (Note: Our role is to simply "let.")

7. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What does it mean to be “anxious for nothing”? How does telling our Father about our struggles lead to peace that “surpasses all comprehension”?
8. Read Philippians 4:8-9. How does dwelling on the pure and honorable align with our new nature in Christ? How does knowing our nature enable us to “practice these things” and bear fruit?

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PART 6: Triumph in Trials

Can You Really Do ALL Things?

We've all heard the teaching: "If you just have enough faith, you can change your circumstances." Well, Paul has a different take in Philippians 4. He reveals the secret to gut-level contentment, no matter what life throws at you. Whether you're riding high or barely holding on, your unbreakable connection to Christ is the secret sauce.

We'll also talk about giving—is it to get a return or improve your circumstances? Nope. It's about joy—real joy—flowing from a heart that has freely given, no strings attached. If your giving isn't joyful, then you're missing the point.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PHILIPPIANS 4:

1. Read verse 11. What are some misconceptions about contentment? How does Paul define true contentment, and what does that reveal about where our sufficiency comes from?
2. Read verses 12-13. Paul talks about thriving in both abundance and need, yet many today use verse 13 as a motivational slogan for success. How does this passage challenge common misunderstandings of "I can do all things through Christ"? What is Paul really saying?
3. Read verses 14-16. Paul commends the Philippians for their generosity in supporting him. What does this reveal about the nature of giving in the Christian life? How does gospel-driven giving differ from merely donating to a cause?
4. Read verse 17. Paul says he isn't seeking a gift, but instead, what "increases to your account." What do you think this means? How does generosity spiritually enrich the giver rather than just benefit the recipient?
5. Read verse 19. How does God supply our needs? Does this verse promise financial wealth, or is there a deeper meaning? How do we experience this provision "in Christ Jesus"?
6. Read verse 20. How does recognizing God as the ultimate source of provision shape our perspective on life's challenges?

7. Read verse 23. Can you think of a time when the grace of the Lord sustained you in a difficult circumstance? How does Paul's closing statement remind us that grace is not just a doctrine but an active, ongoing reality in our lives?



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