

An abstract, colorful, liquid-like graphic that flows from the top right towards the center. It features vibrant shades of blue, purple, pink, and red, with a dark, textured area on the left. The graphic has a sense of movement and depth, resembling a marbled or liquid effect.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

SESSION ONE SAMPLE

I CHOOSE
JOY

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE,
CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

CHIPINGRAM

Purchase Today at LivingontheEdge.org/joy

GETTING STARTED

1. Introduce yourselves to one another and share an interesting fact about yourselves.
2. Do you tend to see things in life as a glass half full or a glass half empty? Why?

WATCH THE VIDEO

Understanding the Power of Focus

(Sample video lesson can be found at LivingontheEdge.org/joy)

DISCUSSION

1. Chip walks us through some key parts of Philippians 1:1-11. Share one thing that jumped out at you from this passage (and feel free to turn there in your Bible).
2. Joy is not the result of perfect circumstances, and as we begin reading Philippians, we notice immediately that Paul and Timothy are imprisoned—clear examples of non-optimal circumstances. In Philippians 1:3-4, however, Paul says, “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.” How do you suppose Paul, being wrongly imprisoned, could find joy in praying for others?
3. In the video, Chip gave this equation: $C + P = E$. Circumstances plus perspective equals experience. How does perspective make the difference in this equation?
4. What does it mean to have an inward focus? How does having an inward focus defeat us?

LIVE IT OUT

1. Close your eyes and imagine a whiteboard. Write the current most challenging circumstance from your life on this imaginary whiteboard.
2. Considering your current circumstances, how can you direct your focus upward toward God or outward toward others?

3. What is one thing you can do this week to change your focus?
Be prepared to report back to the group next week.

WEEKLY WRAP-UP

We have the ability to choose our perspective by where we focus, and when we have an upward, outward, and forward focus, we can tackle life's difficulties with joy! When we begin to look inward, we become self-absorbed, lose true joy, and miss what God wants us to learn and express to others about our difficult circumstances. Our perspective on our circumstances will determine our experience.

This stuff is too good to keep to yourself! Before you wrap up the group time, take a minute to think about who else you could invite to join the group next week. See if you can think of at least two names, write them down, and then pray about inviting those individuals to the group.

DIG DEEPER

Read through the following passages a few times. Underline or highlight key words that stand out to you. (All selections are from the NIV.)

First, consider the following verses about joy from the Old Testament. What are some things you notice about joy?

*The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
(Psalm 19:8)*

The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing. (Proverbs 10:28)

*Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.
(Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

Second, read through this passage from Galatians 5:16-24:

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Now take time to work through these questions:

1. Joy is produced as fruit of the Spirit. With this in mind, why can't the world provide true joy?

2. What are some feelings or emotions that masquerade as joy in your life?

3. How do the desires of the flesh interfere with the fruit of the Spirit in your life? What bad habits or addictions do you need to break? Who can help you?

4. What do difficult circumstances reveal about the flesh?



SESSION ONE

LEADER'S
NOTES

Purchase Today at LivingontheEdge.org/joy

INTRODUCTION

Either read or have someone else read this to your group.



GETTING STARTED

LEADERS: Make sure to record everyone's contact information and distribute copies of it to the whole group.

The "Getting Started" section is meant to help your group members get comfortable with one another. This is an opportunity to begin conversation among the group and begin interacting with the topic in a nonthreatening way. Use the provided icebreaker idea or feel free to create your own.

Keep this sharing time brief so that you have ample time to discuss the group questions together.



WATCH THE VIDEO

LEADERS: Each week contains a video to watch together unless your group members have watched it on their own prior to meeting. This video will help set up your group discussion time. *(Sample video lesson can be found at LivingontheEdge.org/joy)*



DISCUSSION

Part of your role is to lead the group in a conversation rather than teach a lesson. Try to encourage each person to contribute to the discussion.



LIVE IT OUT

This is an excellent opportunity to create some structure for a midweek check-in with your group. Consider a group text or group-messaging app or have your group members pair up in order to touch base during the week. Reach out during the week to see how everyone is doing. Encourage partners to pray with each other at least once a week.

Each week the final question will pose a suggested assignment for the group. At the next meeting, one of the first questions will ask each group member to report their progress. Remember, we grow by applying the lesson, not just learning it!



WEEKLY WRAP-UP

This will typically be a section you can read aloud to the group. After everyone has had a chance to write down a name, pray that these people would join your study over the coming weeks.

Close out your time by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.



DIG DEEPER

For further study, encourage the group to spend some time this week in the “Dig Deeper” section.

Discover **LASTING JOY IN CHRIST**

Take your small-group on a journey to a joy-filled life!
Join Chip Ingram in this study of Philippians 1.

Each study guide includes:

- Eight full study lessons
- An access code to eight video teachings
- Leader's notes
- Tips for starting and leading a small group
- Plus, guidance for making the most of each lesson



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STUDY GUIDE
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