

# Practice Guide for November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Philippians, pt. 3—Restored Rejoicing

### Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

What are some ways you normally celebrate good news or achievements?

### Opening (10 minutes)

Begin with 2 minutes of silence to focus on God’s presence. Afterward, ask someone to open in prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your hearts toward learning how to rejoice in Christ in all circumstances.

Opening Question: When you think of “rejoicing in the Lord,” does it feel like something active or reflective to you? Why?

### Reflecting On Scripture (20 minutes)

Have someone read **Philippians 3:1-11** out loud for the group.

#### Questions for Discussion:

1. This passage with the command to “rejoice in the Lord.” Why do you think rejoicing is presented as a command rather than a suggestion?
2. Why do you think Paul emphasizes rejoicing in the Lord as a safeguard?
3. In verses 4-6, Paul lists his achievements and credentials but then dismisses them as loss for the sake of Christ. What does this tell us about the source of true rejoicing?
4. Paul describes knowing Christ, including the fellowship of His suffering and the power of His resurrection, as the ultimate goal. How does knowing Jesus, and reflecting on His life and work, connect with the command to rejoice in the Lord?

### Community Practice (20 minutes)

Read aloud this quote from Michael Gorman’s “Cruciformity”:

*“Only those who have as their ultimate telos [goal] ‘conformity to the image of God’s Son’ can rejoice in the process of getting to that telos... through their own internal death and resurrections.”*

Take 3-5 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. What area of your pre-Christ life or identity do you struggle to let “die.” How might surrendering it to Jesus reshape your perspective and lead to rejoicing in Him?
2. Name one or a few specific attitudes, habits, or priorities that need to shift for you to live a “cruciform” life shaped by the cross. What are some practical steps you could take to that end?

Share your answers in groups of two or three.

### **Group Discussion:**

- How does rejoicing in the Lord impact the way we view our accomplishments, struggles, and relationships?
- Think about your own experiences of Christ's resurrection power in a difficult situation. How did it lead to rejoicing in Him, and what does it teach you about trusting His process?

### **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

As we conclude our discussion, have someone close in prayer and/or slowly read aloud Augustine of Hippo's prayer, "Perfect Love":

*Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord,  
to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you.  
And, if I cannot do these perfectly in this life,  
let me at least advance to higher degrees every day,  
until I can come to do them in perfection.*

*Let the knowledge of you increase in me here,  
that it may be full hereafter.  
Let the love of you grow every day more and more here,  
that it may be perfect hereafter;  
that my joy may be full in you.*

*I know, Oh God, that you are a God of truth,  
Oh make good your gracious promises to me,  
that my joy may be full; to your honor and glory,  
with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.*

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### **Further Reading:**

- *Philippians (BECNT)* by Moisés Silva
- *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* by N.T. Wright
- *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* by Michael Gorman