



Joy in Serving (Philippians 2:1-30)

Serving is the sweet spot of joy. The apostle Paul said that this joy is discovered at the intersection of serving Christ's interests, our unselfish interests, and the interests of others. Arthur Ash, the great tennis player who gave his life to serving both on and off the court, advocated that joy could only be found in serving others. Just like the heart of the tennis racket is the sweet spot, so the sweet spot of joy resides in the heart of Christ the Servant.

Serve Christ's Interests

First, we must be united with Christ in order to *serve His interests* (Philippians 2:1-2). Too often, we pretend to unite ourselves with Christ only to seek our own selfish desires. However, joy comes when we humbly unite our hearts with Christ in order to serve His interests. Jesus, who was humble in heart (Matthew 11:29), taught His followers that humility toward God would be rewarded in a reconciled relationship with Him (Luke 18:14).

Street Smarts for the Restoration Road

Fully surrender your heart, desires, and life to serve Christ. Prayerfully, offer your calendar, your business card, and your checking account to be used for the advancement of His kingdom. Begin to experience joy in serving Him.

Serve Our Unselfish Interests

Second, we *serve our own unselfish interests* (Philippians 2:3-4). That's right, it is acceptable to serve our own interests when they flow from a humble heart surrendered to Christ. An example is wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). Solomon confirmed, "He who gets wisdom loves his own soul" (Proverbs 19:8).

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Unselfishly, seek a balanced budget, health, good relationships, and growth in wisdom. Solicit a friend to help you in an area of need. Meet once a week to discuss your progress.

Serve Others' Interests

Third, we must *serve the interests of others*, considering them better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4). People outside Christ often attempt to connect with others, but it can be superficial and self-serving. Paul taught us to serve others from a heart that seeks their interests in Christ. Peter said that we should use our gifts from God to serve others in a way that releases God's grace (1 Peter 4:10).

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Consider others better than yourself, looking for opportunities to serve them as if they were royalty. Make your muscles move with your prayers for God to use your



challenges to serve someone going through a similar situation. Go find that person and serve him.

Christ our Example of Humility

Paul gave the example of Christ, who being God, descended from heaven to die on a cross, only to be exalted to the highest place in the heavenly realm (Philippians 2:5-11). The apostle painted a portrait of Christ's humility in serving the Father (Philippians 2:5) that was fleshed out in serving others (Philippians 2:6-8), so that they would serve the Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). Contrast Christ's emptying with Adam, who being man, ascended to be like God (Genesis 3). Both accounts led to death, one willingly, one unwillingly. Unfortunately, our stories all resemble Adam's. The only way to be reconciled with God is to fully surrender our hearts to Christ, recognizing that in His kingdom, the pathway up is down.

Connect with the Light

Paul invited the church at Philippi to *connect with the light of Christ*, who provided the energy to obey through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12-13). Paul charged them to "work out" their salvation with fear and trembling, or humility. "Work out," *katergazomai* in Greek, connoted digging in mines. In other words, these first century believers were to live out their salvation by the power of God, who was "at work" (*energeo*) in them.

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Connect with the light of Christ and become a Rapid Holy Spirit Responder. When He prompts you to act according to His good purpose, respond immediately with obedience. His vision will be followed by His provision.

Reflect the Light

Next, Paul called the church at Philippi to *reflect the light of Christ* (Philippians 2:14-16a). Paul offered practical advice to experience joy in serving: "Do everything without complaining or arguing" (Philippians 2:14), to become blameless and pure, shining like stars (Philippians 2:15). "Blameless" meant "without fault." "Pure" carried a picture of refined metal that was not weakened by mixed impurities. In order to be blameless, we must confess our shortcomings to God, who then purifies us from our mixed motives. This empowers us to be free from complaining or arguing in order to shine like stars, as we hold out the word of life (Philippians 2:16a). Paul used imagery of harbor towers, whose fires directed ships into the port during the night. When we hold out the word of life, we reflect the guiding light of Christ.

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Reflect the light of Christ by doing everything without complaining or arguing. Be blameless and pure when serving others. Confess to God your desire to serve your selfish interests and allow Him to purify you from mixed motives. Hold out the word of life, so others can see the light of Christ.



Direct Others to the Light

Finally, Paul challenged the Philippians to *direct others to the light of Christ* (Philippians 2:16b-18, 19-30). He compared his life with a cup of wine being poured on a sacrifice or on the altar, near the end of a ceremony to seal the act of honoring deity. Paul equated his hardship with the seal stamped on the sacrificial gifts and works of the church at Philippi. This sacrifice brought joy in serving. Paul concluded with examples of those who directed others to Christ's light, discovering serving as the sweet spot of joy (Philippians 2:19-30).

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Be intentional about directing others to the light of Christ. See every day as an opportunity to guide someone from darkness. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your calendar and reclaim your appointments for the purpose of serving others, so that they will serve God.

Conclusion

In order to experience the sweet spot of joy in serving, we must seek the heart of Christ. When we humble ourselves as servants in Christ, He leads us to serve others, who will be drawn to serve Him. This brings incomparable joy as we connect with Christ's light, reflect His light, and direct others to His light.