

OPEN YOURSELF TO JOY

Philippians 4.11-12: I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

___ times in the four short chapters of Philippians Paul writes of his joy or calls upon the Philippians to rejoice when he is in prison, facing a trial that may end with his execution.

TO OPEN OURSELVES TO JOY, WE MUST

1. Open our Arms and Embrace the Fact that Life is _____.

If you want to be happy, expect life to be a struggle.

WHY IS LIFE HARD?

1. You are a _____ being.

2. You're connected to other _____.

3. You are a _____ person.

“Coping with a difficult person is always a problem, especially when the difficult is yourself.”

4. You live in a world that is _____.

Philippians 1.29-30: It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict you saw and now hear to be mine.

2. Open our Minds to What is _____.

Two key insights for peace and contentment:

1. You can control your thought-life.

2. You _____ control your thought-life.

Philippians 4.8: Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or worthy of praise – think about these things.

3. Open our Mouths with _____.

Philippians 4.6-7: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Dale Carnegie: Add up what's already yours and you'll find that you wouldn't sell it for all the gold in the world. The best things in life are yours already.

Lou Gehrig: When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat and vice versa, sends you a gift, that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeeper remember you with trophies, that's something. When you have a father and mother work all their lives so that you can have an education and build your body, it's a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed, that's the finest I know. So, I close in saying that I might have had a bad break, but I have an awful lot to live for.

4. Open our hearts to the reality that God is _____ in us right now.

Philippians 2.12-13: Be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives ... for God is working in you ...

Malcolm Muggeridge: I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my seventy-five years that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence has been through affliction, not happiness.

Hard times can make us _____.

Suffering can make us wise.

Going without can make us appreciate all we have.

Trials can make us more like _____.

5. Open our Eyes to See our _____.

Philippians 2.15: You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them.

Honduras Mission Trip: March 24-27