

Rejoicing in the Lord

a four-step study on biblical happiness in **Philippians 4:4-7**

W	<i>Watching</i> in order to gather the measurable biblical data.
A	<i>Analyzing</i> the passage data to find the main theme and subthemes.
L	<i>Linking</i> the content themes to other Scripture and everyday life.
K	<i>Knowing</i> what to do and planning how to do it.

Rejoice in the Lord always:
and again I say, Rejoice.

Phil. 4:4

Commentary overheard in a Happiness Seminar at imaginary Quest Bible College

Dr. Quest (on the key linking (L) step)

It's important to gather all the biblical data, of course, but you will never truly understand a passage until you compare it to something else. What do you think Phil. 4:4-7 is like?

Tech (on the passage being like a firewall)

It's like my network's security system, my firewall, because the commands in these verses are like gateways that determine what is welcomed into my mind and what is to be filtered out. (If we have enough time, let's check out 4:8-9 as well. It is much the same.)

One of the most important things about a system firewall is to have it in place continually, because you never know when and from where the next attack may come. Likewise, Paul commanded us to rejoice in the Lord **always** (4:4) and to pray about **everything** (4:6).

REJOINING IN THE LORD	<i>Philippians 4:4-7</i> (also see 3:1-3)
W.	A.
<i>who, what, when, etc. (especially measurable things)</i>	<i>Theme Analysis, putting it All together</i>
<p>Who? the Lord (4:4, 5), Christ Jesus (4:7) God (4:6, 7), the God of peace (4:9) you/your (4:5, 6, 7), brethren (4:8) I (4:4) (i.e. Paul, 1:1)</p> <p>Where? the saints and brethren in Philippi (1:1, 4:8) from Paul in prison in Rome (1:7, 13)</p> <p>What stands out?</p> <p>1.) THE REPEATED COMMAND TO REJOICE (4:4) - to rejoice in the Lord (not in circumstances) - meaning to keep on rejoicing, always</p> <p>2.) THE PASSIVE COMMAND TO SHOW RESTRAINT IN ACTIONS (4:5) - to let your gentleness be known, to all - remembering that the Lord is nearness Most of the passage is commands, but 4:5b stands out because it's not.</p> <p>3.) THE NEGATIVE COMMAND re. WORRY (4:6a) - to not keep on worrying about a single thing</p> <p>THE POSITIVE COMMAND to PRAY (4:6b) - to cause everything to be known to God - meaning to keep on praying about all things - petitions, but also with thanksgiving</p> <p>4.) THE POSITIVE RESULTS (4:7) - the special peace of God will stand guard over your hearts & minds (i.e. thoughts)</p> <p><i>Add or change points as needed.</i></p>	<p>What is the main theme? MENTAL STABILITY (4:4-7) - joy centered in the Lord (4:4-5) - non-aggressive contentment (4:5) - overcoming worries via prayer (4:6) - This is ongoing protective thinking.</p> <p>What are some subtheme? CONTENTMENT, GENTLENESS (4:5) - being gentle, content, forbearing (#1933) not aggressive, demanding, or fighting (as seen in 1 Tim. 3:3, Tit 3:2, 1 Pet. 2:18) - because of being satisfied with the Lord, who is near to supply and defend believer</p> <p>THE NEARNESS OF THE LORD (4:5b) - Some think this is the nearness of return. - I think this is the Lord's constant nearness which fits well with ongoing prayer (4:6).</p> <p>PRAYER (4:6b-7) - Keep on praying. - regarding everything, especially negatives, but also including thanksgiving. - This prayer results in the peace of God. This prayer impacts the one who prays. This is not mainly about God answering.</p>

L.

*Like: what is the passage like?***Like what else in Philippians?**

- Like the believers rejoicing in Phil. 3:1
This is safe, protects from error (3:2-3).
- Like standing firm in Phil. 1:27 and 4:1
faith based mental stability
- Like the Lord's humility in Phil. 2:5-8
willingness to suffer, like in 4:5

Like what in other Scriptures?

- Like the contented soldiers in Lk. 3:14
who were not to intimidate, extort
- Like joyous Paul & Silas in Acts 16:25
singing and praying in Philippi jail
- Like Rom. 12:12
rejoicing, bearing trials, continuing to pray
- Unlike Jericho
Those inside were terrified (Josh. 2:9-11).
Their walls did not protect them.
- Like the Lord near in Josh. 5:13-15
viewing "near" as a military term
- Like the Lord near in Psa. 119:150-151
The Lord is nearer than our enemies.

Like what or who else?

- Like a SECURE FORT
safe inside (3:1-3)
Phil. 4:4-7 forms a circle,
guarded by the peace of God (4:7)
guarded constantly
defensive, not aggressive, in nature (4:5)
- Like a computer network FIREWALL
one that protects the mind
- Like HAVING A TRULY GOOD LEADER.
The Lord is near to provide & protect.
This leads to good morale.

Add or change points as needed.
Choose your favorite likeness points.

K.

*Key points for us, Knowing what to do***IN ORDER TO BE SAFE****THINK RIGHTLY BY:****1.) REJOICING IN THE LORD (4:4)**

constantly,
rather than in circumstances or position
rather than in earthly citizenship (3:20)

Check yourself to see what you are rejoicing in.

2.) BEING CONTENT / PEACEFUL (4:5)

because the Lord is near

**3.) PRAYING constantly
INSTEAD OF WORRYING (4:6)**

praying about anything
being thankful

How? *Make some specific applications.*

Dr. Quest (an opening question)

Today, we are in one of the greatest passages on joy, but what exactly does it mean to rejoice in the Lord as Paul commanded twice in Phil. 4:4? I will give you a few minutes to think and do some research. . . [ten minutes later] What did you come up with?

Zeta (on continuous rejoicing and praying)

The grammatical tools show that in Phil. 4:4 Paul commanded us to keep on rejoicing in the Lord. I also noticed that his command to rejoice in 3:1 is the same form, with the additional thought that continuing to rejoice in the Lord is the safe thing to do. The praying in 4:6 was to be continuous as well. It too is protective.

Dan (on who is able to rejoice in the Lord)

I looked for another verse in which rejoice is used twice and found Psa. 68:3. The righteous are to be glad and rejoice before God exceedingly. This is in contrast to the wicked in 68:2 who will perish in God's presence. Only the righteous can rejoice in the Lord who is near (Phil 4:4-5). I also notices there is a lot about God's nearness in Psa. 119:150-151.

Tech (on Paul's rejoicing in Phil. 1:18)

My search engine found a verse right here in **Philippians** with 'rejoice' in it twice! Paul protected his inner core by rejoicing in the fact that the gospel was being preached and by affirming that he would rejoice in the same in the future as well (Phil. 1:18). Rejoicing in good things is like a protective firewall for the mind (1:18, 4:4, 4:8). Quality in; quality out. It all depends on the kind of data we input and use.

Frank (on who is able to rejoice in the Lord)

Why do we have to be so technical?! I don't even have a computer, let alone a search engine. I save a ton of money that way, and the simple cross references in my Bible point to Luke 10:20. The Lord taught his disciples to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. Frankly, I believe that is the point here in Phil. 4:3-4 as well.

Theo (on rejoicing in the Lord Jesus instead of in the emperor)

Recently, Dr. Theoris [the theology professor] taught Phil. 2:8-11 and said that there is much to learn from the status of the Roman emperor who required everyone to bow the knee and confess him as lord. We Christians confess Christ as Lord instead. So I believe Paul commanded the Philippians to continually rejoice in the Lord Jesus instead of in the Roman emperor. Afterall, their true citizenship was in heaven rather than in Rome (3:20).

Dr. Quest (on rejoicing despite the circumstances)

Great point, Theo, but what has not been mentioned? Well, for one, we rejoice in the Lord instead of in circumstances which are constantly changing. Being content (4:5, 4:11-12) and taking everything to God in prayer (4:6-7) helps us do so. Also, I'm surprised that nobody mentioned 1 Thes. 5:16-18.