



## **Small Group Notes for The Joy Manual: Peace**

### **Discovering Together**

How have you seen a split or an interpersonal conflict bring damage to the church?

What do you think happens in the heart of God when he sees his children fighting with each other??

### **Learning Together**

Philippians 4:2-9

1. Two followers of Christ who had contended for the gospel at Paul's side were now fighting with each other. Paul was calling them to "agree in the Lord." What are some of the core beliefs of our faith that all Christ followers hold in common?
2. Why does focusing on these common beliefs help us get beyond our petty disagreements and conflict?
3. Without using a name, what is one relationship in your life where you are facing tension and disagreement?
4. What will you do in the coming days to build bridges and seek healing and peace in this relationship?
5. In this passage Paul gives a few "do's" for Christians and one big "don't!" What does Paul call followers of Christ to "do," and why is each one important for a healthy spiritual life?

What is the big "don't" in this passage, and why do you think Paul hits this so hard?

6. What is one joy you are experiencing in your life right now?
7. How do you express your joy to God and before others?
8. How can you express gentleness in one of the following ways:
  - Through your words
  - Through your touch
  - Through your eyes (looks)
9. What is one situation in your life that is causing anxiety and tension?
10. How can your small group members support you as you seek peace in this situation?
11. Describe a time when you prayerfully surrendered a tough situation to God and experienced a clear sense of God's peace.

The human mind will always set itself on something and Paul wished to be quite sure that the Philippians would set their minds on the right things. This is something of the utmost importance, because it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them. It is, therefore, of the first importance that a man should set his thoughts upon the fine things and here Paul makes a list of them.

—William Barclay, *The Letter to the Philippians*

12. Paul gives us a list of eight things that should be the focal point of our thought life. What are they and why is each one important?

13. One of the best ways to tune our minds in to what is true is developing specific disciplines for daily study of the Bible. What commitment do you have, or do you want: to have, for regular study of the Bible?

14. How can your small group members keep you accountable to meet this goal?

15. How can monitoring what we allow into our minds help keep our thoughts pure?

16. What are some of the personal guidelines you have established to help keep your heart and mind pure?

## **Serving Together**

Pray as a group and celebrate God's power to bring peace in the middle of stormy times. Pray for your group members to know a freedom from anxiety and the peace that passes all understanding. Use the notes you took on questions seven and eight to help guide your prayer time together.

If you know people who have gone through a church split or a time of deep conflict with other followers of Christ, seek to extend the love of Christ to them in one of the following ways:

- Pray for them to experience God's tender healing touch in the parts of their heart that are still hurting.
- Seek opportunities to remind them about healthy and Christ-honouring ministries and churches you know.
- You might even want to invite them to some gathering of your small group and give them a model of Christians who love each other and get along.

Identify one specific action you can take to alleviate the anxiety of a member of your small group. What will you do and when will you do it?