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JOY IS A CHOICE!

Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. **Philippians 1:3-6 NLT**

WHEN WE TRUST GOD IT PRODUCES JOY IN OUR LIVES.

⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. **Philippians 1:6 NLT**

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. **Hebrews 12:1-2 NLT**

When our heart has been wrecked by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our lives are changed forever from the inside out. Our sinfulness is exchanged for His grace and mercy.

- When our heart changes, our actions change.
- When our heart changes, our words change.
- When our heart changes, our values change.
- When our heart changes, our focus changes.

I CAN CHOOSE JOY IN THE MIDST OF MY CIRCUMSTANCES.

- God is still working when I feel stuck.
- Paul didn't see prison as being stuck but an opportunity.

¹² And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. ¹³ For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. **Philippians 1:12-14 NLT**

- God is still working even when we feel attacked.

¹⁷ Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. ¹⁸ But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. **Philippians 1:17-18 NLT**

- Paul found the positive and chose to rejoice.

² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. **James 1:2-3 NLT**

- Our troubles are an opportunity to choose joy.

HOW WE LIVE OUT OUR FAITH CAN BRING JOY TO OTHERS.

²⁷ Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. ²⁸ Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. ²⁹ For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. **Philippians 1:27-29 NLT**

- The privilege of suffering.

RECEIVING SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST JOY AND IT'S A CHOICE.

Next Steps

- Choose to trust Jesus for salvation by totally surrendering your life to Him right now.
- Choose Jesus and choose joy.