

Pastor Swindoll says, let go.

- Let go of your habit of always looking at the negative.
- Let go of your need to fix everybody else’s unhappiness.
- Let go of your drive to compete or compare.
- Let go of your adult children, especially your attempts to straighten out their lives.
- Let go of all your excuses.
- Let go of so many needless inhibitions that keep you from celebrating life.

Let go and allow yourself to laugh again!

Live Pursing Joy, Happiness, and Laughter.

❖ A Positive Mind-Set and the pursuit of happiness is an inward journey. But there are two mind-sets available to us.

Negative Mind-set	Positive Mind-set
• The need for certain things before there can be joy.	The need for virtually nothing tangible to be joyful.
• A strong dependence on others to provide joy.	The ability to create one’s own reasons for joy.
• Focusing on joy as being “out there”	Choosing joy now, making it a present pursuit
• Always in the future ... waiting for something to happen and thereby bringing happiness.	Never waiting for everything to fall into place or for some ship to come in.

“And now brothers and sisters... let me say this one more thing: Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others.

Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.

Philippians 4:8 TLB

❖ Paul’s life is a model for us to follow in learning how to live a life of joy; of how to Laugh Again.

1. Paul is confident and refuses to see himself as a victim of his circumstances.

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brothers and sisters, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. Philippians 1:12-14

How can a person think this way in such miserable circumstances?

Either we ask the negative: Why did this have to happen to me? Or we choose the positive: How has this resulted for some benefit God has in mind?

- ❖ The key for you and I to have a joy filled life is to believe that God loves us and that God is working all things out for God's glory and for our good.

2. *Paul was joyful in Spite of what others said about him or did to him.*

“It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice. Philippians 1:15-18

Paul's attitude and outlook was one of refusing to let his mind become cluttered with judgmental and borderline legalistic thoughts – which are nothing more than joy-stealers.

- ❖ The one thing that all Christians cannot compromise on and must be concerned about is that Jesus Christ is being proclaimed: From our pulpits and from our everyday lives.

3. *Paul was hopeful, regardless of the Uncertainties of life.*

For I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. Philippians 1:19-20

- ❖ There is nothing wrong with taking a look at all the things our lives are filled up with and ask “If I died tomorrow, what in my life today is essential and what is not.” **Then get rid of the stuff that is not essential!**

- ❖ Paul refused to be crippled by other people's words, refusing to submerge himself in self-pity, and refusing to take criticism and attacks personally, Paul remained strong, positive, and sure.

How could Paul stay so strong?

4. *Paul was fully contented because Christ was central.*

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:21

- For me to live is money ... and to die is to leave it all behind.
- For me to live is fame ... and to die is to be quickly forgotten.
- For me to live is power and influence ... and to die is to lose both.
- For me to live is possessions ... and to die is to depart with nothing in my hands.

The secret of living is the same as the secret of joy: Both revolve around Jesus being the center of our lives.

The pursuit of happiness is the cultivation of a Christ-centered, Christ-controlled life.

“Three of the most prevalent joy stealers in all of life. Pastor Swindoll”

1) ***Circumstances.***

But God broadens the dimensions of our circumstances which gives us new confidence. Chains that once bound and irritated us no longer seem so annoying. Our limitations become a challenge rather than a chore.

2) ***Others.***

But God delivers us from preoccupation with others. This cause our contentment level to rise. Other people's opinions, motives, and criticisms no longer seem all that important. What a wonderful deliverance.

3) ***Future.***

But again, God calms our fears regarding ourselves and our future. This provides a burst of fresh hope on a daily basis. Once fear is removed, it is remarkable how quickly peace fills the vacuum. Pastor Swindoll”