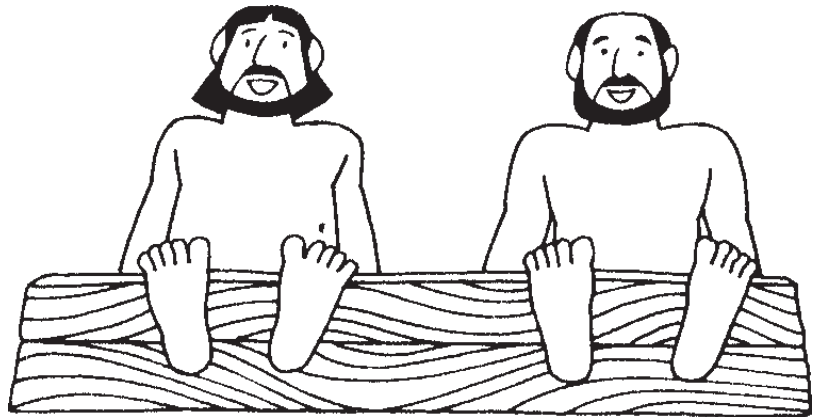


# JOY

## LESSON 6

### Joy in Difficult Circumstances

There are times in our lives when joy may be the farthest thing from our minds. But the biblical joy is not a constant state of ecstasy, it is instead a steady, quiet freedom from doubt, worry and fear - it is courage (which comes from the Latin word for heart). It is a solid, substantial thing like a fruit that grows very gradually every day.



When Paul and Silas were arrested in Philippi for healing the girl who was sick in her mind, they were beaten with rods and then put into the inner prison and had their feet fastened into the stocks. This would have been very painful and uncomfortable. Their backs would have been bruised and cut from the beating. It would have been difficult to find a position in which to rest. It may have been cold and damp and dirty.

Paul and Silas began to sing hymns to God. They didn't blame God for where they were and what had happened. Jesus had warned they would face persecution. They had his example of steadfastness in the midst of suffering. God was not inflicting the pain -- it was their own fellowmen. They knew that the way to rise above their troubles was to put their trust in God and they knew He would take care of them. Perhaps without really intending it, they became an incredible lesson to the jailer and their fellow prisoners.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake which incredibly opened all the doors and loosened all the shackles. The jailer woke in fear and thinking that all his prisoners had escaped was about to kill himself. But the prisoners had not run away. They were all there with Paul and Silas. Why had they not escaped while they had the chance? For the jailer, this was the final bit of evidence. The God he had heard Paul and Silas singing of, was a God who saved.

He brought them up to his house, and cared for their wounds and fed them. Then he and all his house were baptised and they rejoiced greatly. Joy in difficult circumstances can be contagious.

*"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."* (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKSHEET 6: JOY IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

## ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE:

What do the following verses tell us about difficult times?

Psalm 126:6 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 10:13 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastes 3:1-10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

James 1:2-3 \_\_\_\_\_

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## WORD STUDY:

**"courage" "cheer"**

Look up these words "be of good courage" and "be of good cheer". Write out a few examples of these phrases and show what kind of situation they are referring to.

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## APPLICATION:

Read Psalm 69. What is his attitude at the beginning of the Psalm? How has his attitude changed at the end? What has helped to change it?

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