

## Joy Shapers / I Will Choose Joy #2 / Philippians 2:5-11

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, the education, the money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.” (Chuck Swindoll)

An Oxymoron is a figure of speech in our wonderful English language where contradictory terms appear in conjunction. We use some “awfully good” ones during our everyday conversations. At the grocery store, you might have said: “I will take some of those ‘jumbo shrimps.’” Coming out of the dressing room in the department store, you’ve probably been told those “tight slacks” look good on you. How many times were you told to “act natural” when you spotted your middle school crush in public. My favorite go to in marital spats is this one: I’m “clearly misunderstood.” And when you try to eat beets for the first and last time, the only appropriate response is “never again.”

Here’s an Oxymoron you’ll never see support for in the Bible: “optimistic pessimist.” If joy is an internal state of rest that comes from God regardless of which way the cookie crumbles, attitude is her first cousin. Show me someone with the joy of the Lord on the inside, I’ll show you someone with a proper attitude. Similarly, show me an individual with a bad attitude, I’ll show you someone who lacks the joy of the Lord. Claiming one without the other is a “harmonious contradiction.”

The first principle required to choose joy is to let no one or nothing steal it. The second principle is closely related: choosing joy requires choosing every day to let your attitude reflect the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I want to give you 4 shapers of attitude from Philippians 2:5-11.

<sup>5</sup> *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*  
<sup>6</sup> *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

## 1. Object of Comparison (2:5)

- **Story of Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody:** There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. And it ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have.
- **In the Text:** (1) Have this attitude....(2) An emphatic command, meaning “have this attitude, which was in Christ Jesus, and no other.”
- **In our Lives:** (1) Ethics: - Joy isn't found in that's not fair, but in considering Jesus; (2) Socially: - Joy isn't found in evaluating the joy of another or lack thereof, but in considering Jesus; (3) Successes: Joy isn't found in wishing you had what other people do, but in considering Jesus; (4) Family Structure: Joy isn't found in wishing those you love will act and behave in a certain way, it's found in considering Jesus.
- **A Joy Shaper Challenge:** We live in a world of ideals, or the way the world should be. Consequently, we have a hard time with realism, or the way the world is. You work from ideals: what should be starts with you while being realistic about everything around you as it is.

## 2. Measure of Influence (2:6-7)

- **Tombstone Epitaphs:** (1) Here lies John Yeast: Pardon me for not rising; (2) Here lies John Stevens: I raised 4 daughters with one bathroom in the whole house and still there was love; (3) Here lies John Geddie: “When he landed on Vanuatu in

1848 there were no Christians. When he left here for heaven in 1872, there were no heathen.”

- **In the Text:** (1) Herein lies of the great mysteries of the Bible (2) Jesus, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity, emptying himself to be subservient to the Father.
- **But there’s a Lesson:** Influence is directly related to serving, not being served.
- **Someone said it better:** “The very first thing which needs to be said about Christian leaders of all kinds is that they are ‘under’ people as their servants rather than ‘over’ them as their lords. Jesus made this absolutely plain. The chief characteristic of Christian leaders, Jesus insisted, is humility not authority, and gentleness not power.”
- **A Joy Shaper Challenge:** How do you see the church and your relationship to her? If it’s because I really get a lot out of it, you are seeing the Bride of Christ wrong. That’s a being served mentality. People with that mentality will be faithful until something bothers them. And then take that mentality into another body. Instead, it is servant: ‘what can I do in this place to advance the Gospel.

### 3. Degree of Obstinance (2:8)

- **Before the Days of GPS:** GPS technology on your phone prevents you from getting lost. Before GPS, two choices if you were lost: (a) humble yourself and stop and ask for directions; (b) keep driving, telling your wife your taking the scenic route, and run out of gas before you stoop so low as to ask for menial directions.
- **In the Text:** (1) Humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross; (2) Humble self: the surrender of your way and route; (3) For obedience: compliance with someone else’s authority. (4) Humility has to come before obedience. Obedience has to follow humility.
- **In our Lives:** (1) You’ve heard of the Great Commission: “go ye therefore and make disciples (Matt 28:19); (2) Have you heard of the Great Requirement? It’s found in Micah: *“he has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”* (Micah 6:8)
- **Ways to Curb Obstinance:** (1) Act justly: do what is right not in your eyes, but in God’s. (2) Love mercy: especially when others don’t do what is right. (3) Walk humbly with your God: surrender My Way for Thy Way.

#### 4. Understanding of the Pedestal (9-11)

- **Bird with a Broken Wing:** (1) I saw a bird with a broken wing try to climb up to a concrete water pedestal; (2) Couldn't do it because it was too slippery; (3) Found a near by tree and mustered little flights up the side of it from branch to branch; (4) Before jumping into the water pedestal; (5) Problem we have is this: we want the pedestal but we don't want the climb.
- **In the Text:** (1) Therefore, God exalted him; (2) This is important because (a) Paul uses the example of Christ to stress how he works in the lives of the Philippians and (b) it gives the correct order of how he exalts (3) The cradle – away in a manger/humble beginnings (4) the cross – obedience to death on a cross; (4) The crown – Therefore, God exalted.
- **A Prayer God Will Not Answer and Will Not Lead to Joy:** Give me glory without humility. Give me glory without pain. Why? Because that's a prayer that wants the crown without the cross or the cradle.
- **A Prayer God Will Answer that Will Lead to Joy:** God, help me to keep going. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. For, I know difficult roads lead to beautiful destinations.