

## Choose Joy In Hard Times

"We're not all going through the same thing, but we are all going through some thing."

"Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." [James 1:2]

It's very different to go through pain with purpose and without purpose.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice."  
[Philippians 4:4]

"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." [Philippians 1:12]

### 1. Choose to look beyond what happened.

Joy is a focus before it's a feeling.

"As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear." [Philippians 1:13-14]

### 2. Choose to find new opportunities.

"It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives...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. 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 1:15-18]

3. Choose to focus on what really matters.

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

"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."  
[C.S. Lewis]