



Sermon Discussion Guide

Title of the Sermon: What Are You Counting On?

Series Name: Philippians: Unshakeable Joy

Main Text: Philippians 3:1–11

Introduction

This guide can be used on your own or with a small group to reflect on the weekend message and apply it to your life. Choose the questions that work best for your group—there’s no need to go through them all. To learn more, visit silverdalebc.com/smallgroups.

Icebreaker Options

- When you feel stressed or uncertain, what do you naturally lean on for comfort—people, routines, success, faith, or something else?
- What’s something you used to think would satisfy you—but later realized it couldn’t?

Leader’s Note

Paul reminds us that joy is only unshakeable when our confidence is in the right place. In this passage, he challenges the things people often trust in—religion, background, and performance—and points us to the only sure foundation: a relationship with Jesus Christ.

1: Counting On Your Religion

Key Scripture

“Rejoice in the Lord... and do not put confidence in the flesh.”

— Philippians 3:1, 3

Discuss

1. What are some modern examples of spiritual effort that are poor substitutions for trusting Christ?
2. Why do you think people are tempted to believe that religious activity makes them right with God? How have you been tempted to believe this in your own life?

Leader's Note

Paul warns against trusting religious performance to earn God's favor. Real joy is not found in spiritual effort—it's found "in the Lord."

2: Counting On Your Background or Race

Key Scripture

"If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews;"
— Philippians 3:4-5

Discuss

1. What are some "background credentials" people rely on today (family name, upbringing, education, nationality, reputation)? Which are you tempted to rely on?
2. Why is it dangerous to believe your background makes you closer to God or better than others?

Leader's Note

Paul shows that even the most impressive identity markers don't bring salvation. God has no grandchildren—each person must personally respond to Christ.

3: Counting On Your Righteousness

Key Scripture

"Regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless."
— Philippians 3:6

Discuss

1. What does it look like today to try to "be good enough" to earn God's approval?
2. Why do legalism and self-righteousness often lead to criticism, pride, or lack of joy? Where is this true in your own life?

Leader's Note

Paul once believed moral performance could make him right with God—but later realized that self-made righteousness is exhausting and empty without Christ.

4: Counting On Your Relationship with Christ

Key Scripture

“I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

— Philippians 3:8

Discuss

1. Paul says knowing Christ is worth more than everything else. What would it look like for you to lay down everything else to trust in Christ to save and sustain you?
2. What are some ways that you can grow in your fellowship with God, without relying on your own background or righteousness?
3. Paul’s goal was to know Christ, His resurrection power, and even the fellowship of His sufferings (v.10). How does suffering deepen our relationship with Jesus? When has this been true in your life?

Leader’s Note

Christianity is not about religious achievement—it’s about knowing Jesus personally. We come to Christ by faith, and we grow by walking with Him daily, even through hardship.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to stop counting on the things that cannot save us—our religion, our background, or our righteousness. Teach us to rejoice in You and to trust fully in Christ alone. Give us a deeper desire to know Jesus, walk with Him daily, and live with joyful confidence in the gospel. We lift up the needs shared in our group today and ask You to work in each life. Amen.