

**PHILIPPIANS (COUNT IT ALL JOY)
PROGRAM 28 (#912113)
WEEK 6 (#912323)
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SERIES: Philippians (Count It All Joy)

TITLE: Program 28 – Losing All To Gain Christ [Kay’s Guest is John (Ion)]

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

When somebody holds up a book called the Bible what do you think about it? I mean, do you think, Hey, that’s knowledge, that’s a thick book, there’s an awful lot in that book? And when you open it up and you begin to read it, does it kind of just, your eyes skim over the words and, and you think that that was nice, but the word doesn’t go deep? Do you realize, Beloved, that these are the very precepts for life and that they are very, very practical and applicable? We’ll look at that today.

PART ONE

Kay: I am so very excited to have a very close friend and associate, really a co-laborer in Precept Ministries International here, to share with you the practicality of the book of Philippians. This man is John and John and his wife Svetlana serve with Precept Ministries International in Eurasia, and John and Svetlana are both from the country of Moldova, and he is a

TaeKwon-Do champion. And if you listened to the program where Vasile shared his story, this is the John that he was talking about that was his teacher. We're so glad to have you with us. And you know what I would like you to do is I would like you to share your testimony so that we can get to know you and how you came to know Christ, what you were B.C., before Christ and what you were after, because I think that would help in them understanding your love of the book of Philippians.

John (Ion): I came to know Christ about 14 years ago. And before, my goal was to become a black belt. And black belt means the victory over the power of darkness.

Kay: Oh! I didn't know that.

John (Ion): And even though that I got black belt after 9 years of training I didn't get any power, any victory. And my wife was showing me this because when I was coming home I was like a teacher. I had many students, but was enough to say some words. And I immediately was forgetting about my philosophies, about the religion. And we have in one fight a World European Championships together.

Kay: (Laughing) In other words, you really had some knock down, drag out quarrels with your wife.

John (Ion): Yes, yes.

Kay: And it's the same wife you're married to now.

John (Ion): Yes, and I understood that we need some changes, and that's why we invited the priest, a Greek Orthodox priest to sanctify our whole house. But I didn't know at the time that my heart must be sanctified. So when I receive invitation to go to the, some seminars in Moscow, one year seminar, I left my family and even though my wife was begging me not to leave her of my child without any support, I said that for me sport is more important than everything. That's why I left her and I went to Moscow.

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Kay: You left her without money?

John (Ion): Yes, without everything.

Kay: You're awful.

John (Ion): Yes.

Kay: Yes, awful.

John (Ion): So, and I went there and month after month I was training hard, but at the same time I was living an immoral life without my wife close. I let myself to do everything. But in that time I started to read the Bible. My goal was to find about the psychology of Jesus, I was calling.

Kay: Oh, the psychology of Jesus.

John (Ion): Yes, because I had a team, which I was training to be obedient to me fully, and was a gangster, a Mafia team.

Kay: A Mafia team.

John (Ion): Yes, but I was calling a special team. So, and I was very interested to know how to have a full influence over them.

Kay: Uh huh, have them under your thumb, have them under your power.

John (Ion): Yes, and that's why I started to read the Bible to find out Jews have such great influence over so many disciples.

Kay: Uh huh. Now let me just stop and ask: where did you find a Bible? You're in Moscow, you're in a Communist country.

John (Ion): Yes.

Kay: How did you find a Bible?

John (Ion): Just before I went to Moscow, one pastor met me and gave me a Bible. And he said, but tell me about the, oriental philosophies because I was teaching this oriental philosophies.

Kay: Taoism.

John (Ion): Yes. And I ask him do you think they are wrong? Why you are telling me about Christianity? But I say okay, I will read because it's useful to know about Christianity too, because I was gathering all the information about spiritual things.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): Because according to oriental philosophies, according to our philosophy in TaeKwon-Do, in order to become a really master you have to get spiritual ...

Kay: Foundation?

John (Ion): Foundation, and that's why I was looking for any spiritual...

Kay: Power you can find.

John (Ion): Yes.

Kay: Yeah.

John (Ion): And in Moscow reading the Bible, I began to realize that there is a power and God was showing me in different circumstances that there is a God, but I did not want to recognize God because I lived with a lot of women, women and I thought that I don't need a God who not allow me to do everything that I want to do. So reading the Bible I started even to pray and I said, "God, if You really exist, show me something. I, I can't believe in just in such way. I, I need the proof."

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And I was expecting to see miracle in the sky, but miracle happens not in the sky, but directly in my heart. In '91, 19th of September of '91, God just came into my heart when, that night in the hotel in Moscow. I was praying the same prayer: God if You really exist show me something.

And one of the verse from the Bible just opened the meaning of the whole book. I was reading Sermon of Mount.

Kay: Sermon on the Mount.

John (Ion): Sermon on, on the Mountain, so and that time I started to realize that I am really a sinner and I need to be changed. And that night I see such a freedom and on the next day I started to tell anybody that God really does exist and He's so near to us, and we, we have just to ask Him to come into our hearts. And even though I didn't know in that time English, I just knew five words. I just changed the order of those words. I try to using five words to tell anybody about God's love.

Kay: Oh...

John (Ion): So,

Kay: In just five words?

John (Ion): Yeah because there we had sportsmen from all around the world because was an International seminar.

Kay: I see.

John (Ion): And they understood that something happened with me. My close friends they try to tell me that something wrong happened, happened to me because they saw me with woman before and now I was speaking about God.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And after three days I started to doubt and I thought why if God doesn't exists...

Kay: You started to doubt?

John (Ion): Yeah, because as I thought: Why if all the feelings which I had are not more than self-suggestion or hypnosis?

Kay: Yes.

John (Ion): I thought long time about God and maybe I gave birth to this feeling in my, my heart and what I going to do if somebody will try to kill me. I don't know why this thought came to my mind, but in that very day, on the third day after I came to know Christ when I lost my joy doubting God showed me His mercy, His glory and allowed a guy to put me a knife on my neck and that guy, in anger started to push that...

Kay: Push that knife into you.

John (Ion): Yeah, and I, I started to bleed. And I didn't know many verses from the Bible, but why one I heard from TV and it said the verse, ["Don't be afraid of the one who can kill the body but can kill the soul."] (Matthew 10:28)

Kay: Oh, how neat!

John (Ion): I said in a loud voice and that, that man,

Kay: You said that out loud, that verse?

John (Ion): Yes, yes and that man just went away. And later I found out that the, all the verses from the Bible, if you'll say with the faith, you have the power.

Kay: Yeah, yes.

John (Ion): So in that moment I had a love, even to my enemy. I was ready to hug him and that was the biggest miracle for me and the proof, because I knew that I didn't have any love to anybody, even to my wife.

Kay: Yes.

John (Ion): And ah, I called my wife. I said you know I am a new person. Now I am really a new person and I went to Moldova from Moscow, a long way, about 2,000 miles. And when I came home I said you know God

changed my heart. Jesus entered my heart, but she understood that I used to be the oriental philosophies, now I got crazy on Christianity.

Kay: (Laughing)

John (Jon): But she knew for sure that we didn't allow to keep peace in our house longer than three days. And that's why on the third day she was waiting. On the third day she got amazed. After one week she was so amazed that God really changed me.

Kay: That, (laughing), because there was total peace.

John (Jon): Yes.

Kay: It wasn't because a priest sanctified the house, but because God sanctified your heart, because He took away that heart of stone and gave you a heart of flesh. Isn't that exciting? O Beloved, just know this: It doesn't matter where you are, it doesn't matter who you are. If you will cry out to God, it doesn't matter what you've done, where you've been, if you will cry out to God He will hear. He says, ["If you seek for me with all your heart I will be found."] (Paraphrase, Jeremiah 29:13) Jesus said that the **"Words that I speak, they are Spirit and they are life."** (John 6:36b) And His word does not return unto Him void. So a skeptic can open up the Word of God; they can begin to read for the wrong purpose, the wrong motive in order to have spiritual power, but not obey God; and yet, God can work when we cry to Him and we can say to Him, "God, show me if You are really God." Well, we'll continue this right after this break.

PART TWO

Kay: Welcome back, Beloved. Isn't this exciting, to see again, to hear afresh the power of the Word of God. These are precepts of life. Now I want to continue John with your story of how God just absolutely changed you. You know I have traveled with you in Moscow, in St. Petersburg, Budapest. As a

matter of fact, anytime I travel with Mia and Costel I travel with you, because you are their right hand man, you and Vasile. And I have watched you with Svetlana. I have watched you with your wife. I have watched you play with her, do TaeKwon-Do, chase each other. I've watched you hug her; kiss her, hold her hand. I've watched you and your marriage is something that another woman or man could look at and it would be an example. What a change! So you, three days had passed and there was no war. A week had passed and there was still peace. So what happened to Svetlana? What did she want to know?

John (Ion): Svetlana got confidence that if somebody changed me, could be only God.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And that's why when we used to have any problems, she was asking me, let's go to pray because she's saw how God answered to the prayers.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And ah, after I came to know Christ I fell in love with my Svetlana like a teenagers and was so good to see how God established like a new family.

Kay: Uh huh. How many children did you have then?

John (Ion): I had at that time, only one. Now praise the Lord, we have three.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And after that I went to Moscow again, but one time in the hotel I came to one person, my Spirit moved me and ask him, "Are you a Christian?" and he said, "Yes, I am." And we started to speak about Christianity and I found out that he's from Moldova.

Kay: Oh.

John (Ion): And he gave me the address where the church, because at that time I found only the church in Moscow. I called information and that time was just after the been a strike in Moscow.

Kay: Yeah.

John (Ion): And ask them, I would like to have a church, and they gave me different orthodox churches, the addresses of different churches. But I said no, I want to go to the church, to the Scripture church.

Kay: A church where they're going to teach the Scriptures.

John (Ion): And they said, you know, we don't have any information. But I said maybe you have. And they gave me the address of one Baptist church, and after three years I went again to Moscow, and I try to found out the address because I forgot it through the information, and they said you know, we don't have a, this kind of information. But I said you gave me three years ago. They, they said no it's impossible because we, we will have in the future, but not now. And to continue our story I found from that man where is the church in Moldova. And when I came to the church in Moldova I didn't know why the people are gathering in the church, but I understood that maybe they are working hard during one week to gather their neighbors, their friends. And to bring them to the church to hear the gospel. And that's why next time I came to church with 25 people.

Kay: Oh! (laughs) You just rounded up 25 persons and brought them to church.

John (Ion): Yes, and during the week...

Kay: (To Viewing Audience) Let me ask you a question: when was the last time you did that? I mean, when my friend, was the last time that you were so excited about Jesus Christ that you rounded up your friends and said, come on or you sat down and opened the Word of God to them or said, hey, here's a 40-minute Bible study? We have 40-minute Bible studies. Let's go

through it and let's find out how to have a real relationship with God. When was the last time? Be convicted. I'll be convicted with you. Go ahead.

John (Ion): So in the Communist country, when I came of so many people and I started to bring my support team the pastors they were confused because they were little bit afraid of the, this...

Kay: TaeKwon-Do people.

John (Ion): And Mafia people, people too.

Kay: Yes, and Mafia, O you were bringing the Mafia.

(Both laugh.)

John (Ion): But step-by-step God work their hearts and even though I tried to tell them about Jesus, they got confused because they were expecting me some, some very deep complicated philosophies.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): But now the, the subject was so simple that there is a way to God and this way is Jesus. And they said to all of them that we, we are looking for God, but we found a way.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And ah, I ah, had a lot of questions because I read the Bible maybe in two or three weeks.

Kay: Uh huh, the whole Bible.

John (Ion): The whole Bible and I wrote down a lot of questions, which I got. And I had like a second Bible, my notebook of many, many questions, and I was looking, I was going from one brother to another asking questions. And I got so many answers and I ask God, "God, Lord, why if You are one, if You have only one Spirit, why You have so many interpretations?"

(Kay laughs.)

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John (Ion): And I just figure out that should be an order, because God, our God is a God of order, and He has order in everything and she, He has to have an order in studying the Bible. That's why when I when I got the first book, one of the brother from our church gave me Lord, I Want to Know You.

Kay: Oh, my study, the book I wrote on the names of God.

John (Ion): Very first book, yes, I got.

Kay: Is that the first book you got?

John (Ion): Yes, I got so excited because I saw a simple way to study the Bible and to teach others.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And they open one group. And after leading that Bible study I said, now you have to pass at least three months through this book to understand real meaning of God's character. But after I pass, I led the second group, I said, no, no, no. You have to teach twice this. And after that I realize three times that you need to understand. But that was the blessing for us.

Kay: O my goodness. Now we just have just a brief few minutes, but tell me how you met Mia and Costel.

John (Ion): Just in the beginning after I came to know Jesus I was invited to Romania.

Kay: Uh huh.

John (Ion): And there I met Mia and Costel. And Costel came to me and he hugged me, but nobody hugged me before, and I was so amazed that this man, he doesn't know me, but was so friendly. And they invited me and Vasile to follow them to all the conferences. And from that time we never stopped.

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Kay: Never stopped, and you have been teaching people all over Eurasia, and you've been in many countries where your life has been in danger. You've been picked up by the police, right.

John (Jon): Yes.

Kay: And interrogated and yet God has protected you. And you've gone to Muslim countries and it's been very, very dangerous. You know you said that Philippians was your favorite book, or one of your favorite books. And I want you to know, Beloved, that we are sitting here not only with a TaeKwon-Do master or teacher, but also an Olympic champion. And this is a man that has taken TaeKwon-Do and has used it in order to bring the gospel to many people. As a matter of fact, they have to do nine Precept courses, or nine or twelve?

John (Jon): Eleven.

Kay: Eleven Precept courses in order to get their black belt, in order to have that power over darkness. And that power over darkness comes, Beloved, from knowing the Word of God. Remember the Word of God is the sword of the spirit, the one and only offensive weapon to use to be more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus.