

A Small Group Study and Discussion in the Book of Philippians

04 - WHAT WILL YOU THINK ABOUT?

Paul gives us three things to do to maintain godly patterns of life as we walk with God.

(Philippians 4:1-5 NKJV) “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. {2} I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. {3} And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. {4} Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. {5} Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved”

The term “stand fast” means to “take your position and maintain it against all odds - to abide without moving - to persevere where you are at.” Paul begins by encouraging the Philippian church to “stand fast in the Lord.” He repeats it in verse 5. The way to do this is to put your trust in the Lord and not anything or anyone else. Keep your relationship with the Lord firm and steady! He is in supreme authority and control over your world.

🗨️ What is most difficult for believers, when it comes to standing fast?

How does the Bible address these difficulties?

🗨️ What advice would you give people who easily waver and have a hard time maintaining their Christianity? (Stay away from clichés.)

Verse 4: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

Paul said, first, “stand fast in the Lord” and then, “rejoice in the Lord.”

Two observations

1. Both the standing and the rejoicing are to be “in the Lord.”
2. Notice the order... You will never (2) rejoice in the Lord for very long unless you are (1) standing fast in Him - as a habitual way of life (regardless of your natural situation).

🗨️ How can we consistently be joyful in the Lord? Elaborate on the application to your life of being joyful in the Lord. What does it mean?

See how well you can make a brief, three-point teaching outline on “Standing fast in the Lord.” One point = one paragraph. Use one Scripture as the basis for each point. Try finding verses from other epistles to use. Make sure your last point is instructive and encouraging!

What would you say to a person who was discouraged because they experienced the following? (Try to apply your outline on “Standing fast in the Lord.”)

- (a) Lost the job they had for fifteen years.

- (b) Lost the dog they had for fifteen years.
- (c) Lost the spouse they had for fifteen years (through a divorce they did not want).
- (d) Lost all the money they had saved for the last fifteen years.
- (e) Lost the faith they had worked so hard to have for the last fifteen years.

(Suggested end of your First Session in Chapter 4)

I. WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN OUR FEELINGS AND FEARS TEMPT US TO LIVE IN ANXIETY AND WORRY?

(Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV) “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; {7} and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

A. Reasonable Concern - a Good Emotion (Faith-filled Self-Control)

Emotions are God-given and not harmful to us unless we allow them to control our lives. The God-given emotion of “concern” is a good emotion. Worry is not! When our concern is Spirit-led and reasonable (submitted to godly thinking processes), it alerts us to potential problems or trouble. We are then able to deal with what concerns us (the potential problem or trouble), on the basis of the facts - what we know God says in His Word.

 **When and how did your “concern” result in something good happening?**

B. Unreasonable Concern - Leads to Anxiety and Worry

“Anxiety” comes when we deny the power of God's word. We become anxious when we allow our “concern” to become “unreasonable concern.” To be “anxious” means to be “fearfully or unreasonably concerned - to fearfully feel we have lost control over what we believe is happening.” An anxious person has uneasy, disquieting, fearful feelings. Anxiety is therefore, a feeling that goes far beyond the good emotions God has designed into us for our own protection. Anxiety becomes a trap we fall into, called fearful confusion. We can have great difficulty getting out of it. If allowed to continue, this trap will bring on other disquieting emotions. These other emotions will keep us from making decisions, by paralyzing us within the trap. Anxiety takes our liberty in Christ from us. It keeps us from doing the will of God and being all He wants us to be.

 **When you experience anxiety, what else do you feel?**

C. Winning the Fight over your Emotions

1. By Prayer

(Philippians 4:6 NKJV)

Prayer is simply, open communication with God. Communicating with God is exercising your position in Christ, and continually renewing your relationship with Him. Praying reminds you of Who Christ is in your life and what He is able and willing to do. You cannot help knowing that you are not alone in your difficulty. He speaks assurance and instruction to you. As He does, you begin to feel more at ease and less anxious.

 **Should your position in Christ affect any anxiety you feel? Explain.**

2. By Supplication

(Philippians 4:6 NKJV)

A correct way to understand the meaning of supplication is to think of it as a humbly submitted “prayer request.” To supplicate is to ask earnestly and humbly. Jesus said, when you pray, believe that you will receive what you ask for and you will get it! (Mark 11:23, 24)

Supplication is not begging. It is appropriating what God gracefully provides because of your position in Christ!

3. with Thanksgiving

(Philippians 4:6 NKJV)

Thanksgiving plainly means, “Giving thanks.” You acknowledge that God is able to do what you ask of Him *by thanking Him, even before you get your answer*. Your thanksgiving shows your faith. A show of faith drives out fear, confusion and uncertainty. It gives you the strength to move through the problem and come out with your victory.

4. The Peace of God

(Philippians 4:7 NKJV)

Notice that the requests are made to God. Sometimes people are able to help, but God is always able. Make sure you turn first to God and then follow His directions to others. The result will be the peace of God, or peace sourced from God - with all its power to replace anxiety in your heart and mind. The Scriptures declare it will guard what it has brought you. The beautiful thing about God working in you to guard your heart and mind is that you do not have to understand how He is doing it. You just have to receive it and walk in it. Anxiety, confusion and fear are prevented from living in you because you something that surpasses human understanding is at work, and will work every time you surrender to it. Remember, all this happens “through Christ,” so just relax and trust Him for the best.

 **Answer the previous question again, based on Philippians 4:6-7 (Paragraphs 1-4 above).**

(Suggested end of your Second Session)

II. HOW CAN WE BE CERTAIN GOD WILL BE WITH US IN THE VERY MOMENT WE NEED HIM?

(Philippians 4:8-9 God's Word Translation) "Finally, brothers and sisters, keep your thoughts on whatever is right or deserves praise: things that are true, honorable, fair, pure, acceptable, or commendable. {9} Practice what you've learned and received from me, what you heard and saw me do. Then the God who gives this peace will be with you."

Paul is describing a thought-life that is fully pleasing to God... one that includes Him in every part of your day. This is a continual two-stage process. It is a cycle that can become a reactive lifestyle, whenever your thoughts begin to drift away from God and toward whatever might be disturbing your peace.

A. Living a Lifestyle of Spiritual Awareness and Spirit-led Reaction

The first part of the redemptive process of protecting your peace is to be aware of where your thoughts are going. Then, you are positioned to take the necessary action to bring them back where they belong - on whatever is right or praiseworthy according to Philippians 4:8. Make this a lifestyle! You will remain a winner and a champion for God!

How do we know which thoughts need to be controlled, corrected and redirected?

(2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

1. God's Word will give you the standards to test your thoughts by... and the Scriptural tools to control them.
2. Keep your relationship with the Holy Spirit on excellent terms. Remind yourself to love Him and include Him in your decision-making processes. Get in the habit of turning to God, praying as part of your processes of life, especially when you sense temptation.

(John 16:13 NKJV) "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

According to Philippians 4:8, what do we do to redirect our thoughts, so our paths are proper and remain aimed at our destinies?

1. First, judge by the Word and by your relationship with the Holy Spirit what is right and praiseworthy. Then focus your attention on these things. Verse 8 gives us a checklist that is no problem to use. It will not fail you. It is clear and easy to check any thought against it.

2. Second, tell the devil to go. Jesus reminded the devil of what God's Word says ([Matthew 4](#) and [Luke 4](#)). You do exactly the same thing! Be specific and unwavering.

B. The Value of Imitation, Fellowship and Accountability

We learned that the first part of the redemptive process of protecting your peace is to be aware of where your thoughts are going. The second part is to imitate, have fellowship with, and be accountable to God-fearing, God-pleasing people. This is vital! If the peace of God is to be present, imitation, fellowship and accountability cannot be neglected. Otherwise, you open yourself up to a sure attack on your thought life that could lead you away from God. Participation these three is a gift provided by God, to help you to grow and remain strong in the Lord and successful in your life. Do not neglect this gift. Submit yourself to it with a new appreciation for the value it has. It will change your life!

 **Are you accountable to others who are doing their best to live Godly lives? What steps can you take to insure this is happening?**

Connect Philippians 4:6-7 and Philippians 4:8-9. Study them as one. Elaborate on what they are they saying to, based on some meditation and application of the lesson, above.

(Suggested end of your Third Session)

III. WHAT ELSE CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS?

(Philippians 4:10-13 NKJV) “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. {11} Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: {12} I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. {13} I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

A. We can learn the Power of Contentment

“for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:” (verse 11)

There seems, for all of us, a monumental challenge to live a fully content life. Our human nature seems to fly in the face of the peace of God within. Being content can be an elusive thing. It often seems either out of reach or difficult to hold onto. As the Apostle Paul says, somehow in the midst of life's experiences (good and bad), he learned about contentment and was able to apply it to his own life.

 **In what way is contentment still out of reach and not a reality for you?**

Psalm 23: Four Keys to Understanding Contentment

A study David's confession in **Psalm 23** will give us the four key thoughts to help us understand why we are able to live above our circumstances and to content in them.

(Psalms 23 NKJV) "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. {2} He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. {3} He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. {4} Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. {5} You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. {6} Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."

1. *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

🗒️ **What reason does Psalm 23:1 give us to be content?**

🗒️ **How you could apply this in your own life!**

2. *"I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*

🗒️ **What reason does this verse give us to live without fear of the future?**

3. *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."*

🗒️ **What does this verse mean personally to you?**

B. You are a "Can Do Christian"

Philippians 4:13 NKJV) "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

🗒️ **In what ways is Philippians 4:13 not a reality for you?**

We know that in our own strength we cannot be fully successful. It takes the power of God to stand in the face of life's challenges and to overcome them successfully. You may have heard it said, "When God guides, He always provides."

🗒️ **What does God provide that strengthens us?**

(Psalm 23:5 NKJV) "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over."

God prepares and provides more than just food for our stomachs. He provides a table filled with His Word, His joy and the power of His name. It is a table set with a food called truth, for a particular people. Jeremiah said,

(Jeremiah 15:16 NKJV) “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”

God also provides an anointing or power to break free of bondage and to take you to freedom. You are fully equipped. **Will your cup run over? Will you feast on what God has given you?**

Review: The issues we studied in the four chapters of Philippians	
01 GRACE AND PEACE	
I.	GRACE AND PEACE... A GIFT FROM GOD
II.	THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE – CONFIDENT OF VICTORY IN CHRIST
III.	CHRIST'S WAY: ABOUNDING LOVE - TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD
IV.	IN CHRIST: CONFIDENCE IN ANY SITUATION
V.	OUR LIFE <i>IS</i> CHRIST
02 - THE HUMBLER, THE HOLY SERVANT	
I.	LOWLINESS OF MIND
II.	THE FORM OF A SERVANT
III.	THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD
IV.	THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST, THE HOLY SERVANT
V.	POURED OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING
03 - WHO AND WHAT IS YOUR CONFIDENCE IN?	
I.	WHO ARE YOUR TEACHERS?
II.	HOW CAN WE BE ALL THAT CHRIST WANTS US TO BE? Part 1
III.	HOW CAN WE BE ALL THAT CHRIST WANTS US TO BE? Part 2
IV.	WHAT IS THE PATTERN WE MUST FOLLOW TO BE ALL CHRIST WANTS US TO BE?
04 - WHAT WILL YOU THINK ABOUT?	
I.	WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN OUR FEELINGS AND FEARS TEMPT US TO LIVE IN ANXIETY AND WORRY?
II.	HOW CAN WE BE CERTAIN GOD WILL BE WITH US IN THE VERY MOMENT WE NEED HIM?
III.	WHAT ELSE CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS?

(This ends our study in Philippians.)