

LIFELINES

Six Words of Rescue for Those
Who Are Struggling

WEEKLY STUDY



WEEK SIX

The LIFELINES series is based on the beautiful and challenging letter to the Philippians. Each week we have been offered a “lifeline” that God intends to lift us up by. In this concluding weekend, we looked at Paul’s words about anxiety and contentment. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group go to www.prov.church/signup and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then prayer this prayer together:

God, You know our hearts and you know our weakness. When we are in a season of stress, we can fall into traps that keep our focus on ourselves instead of you. Forgive us God. We reach for the lifelines you offer to us to be lifted up to a beautiful life in Christ. We reach for Jesus. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Paul wrote the words of encouragement and challenge as he was sitting in prison. Are there real or metaphorical prisons that you find yourself in today? Have you been able to worship God even in struggles? What is it like to worship God when you are feeling low?
- *Pray a prayer of rejoicing and give your anxiety to God.*

TUESDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 6.6-8

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

- Accumulation does not equal contentment. Here Paul is offering perspective on the things which lead to contentment. Do you know people who seem to live in full contentment as long as they have food and something to wear? Can you say that about yourself? If not, what barriers to contentment do you think are most present in your life?

- *Pray that you will see the things you have accumulated in proper perspective, and find the great gain of contentment.*

WEDNESDAY: MARK 4.35-41

³⁵ *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."* ³⁶ *Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.* ³⁷ *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.* ³⁸ *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*

³⁹ *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

⁴⁰ *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"*

⁴¹ *They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

- Notice how Jesus didn't meet the fear and anxiety of the disciples with more anxiety. Instead he offered peace. The disciples went to the right person for help, but they were approaching the matter with fear. What helps you to have confidence in Jesus while you are in the storm?
- *Pray that you and those around you would seek out Jesus in troubling times.*

THURSDAY: Matthew 6.34

³⁴ *"Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes. (The Message)*

- The thing about tomorrow is--it hasn't happened yet. Jesus invites us to see what is in front of us, and not waste it. Do you find yourself getting so worked up about the future that you lose sight of the good things around you today?
- *Pray for increasing trust in Jesus to provide what you need when you need it.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.11-13

...for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

- Contentment is something that Paul teaches about while he himself is dealing with extremely difficult circumstances. The secret he has learned is that he can do all things through the strength of Jesus. When has the power of Christ lifted you beyond your circumstances?
- *Pray this line from Paul as many times as it comes to mind today--"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."*

SATURDAY: HEBREWS 13.5

⁵ *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

- Money is an outward symbol of accumulation. Money can also be a tool for blessing. Can you accumulate wealth without loving money? How can the love of money lead to forgetting the promise that God will never leave or forsake you?
 - *Pray that God will remain your first love and that your contentment will come from him.*
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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Every week in this series you've heard a line that said, "The struggle with _____ (comparison, complaining, perspective, anxiety, contentment) is real." Which of these has most resonated with you? How is God speaking into that struggle?
- The power and presence of Christ is the lifeline that God offers us in the midst of our struggles. What is the next step you can take to grab ahold of that lifeline?