



WEEKLY STUDY

Finding Calm - Week 1

This is the first of four weeks where we will focus on a small passage from Paul in Philippians 4. It's a familiar passage for Providence Church, and you may be surprised at how well you already know it! You are invited to read the full passage each day this week and pray about its implications for you as a follower of Jesus in this world of chaos.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for people in your community that are living in fear.
- Pray for people around the world who need the calming presence of Jesus.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do 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.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- Rejoice in the Lord always. Does this mean that we have to pretend to be happy even when we are not? Nope. Paul didn't tell the church to always be happy, rather believers can rejoice even when they're not particularly feeling great. Have you ever been surprised by gratitude in the middle of a hard day?

- **Prayer Prompt: Rejoice always,¹⁷ pray continually,¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (Thessalonians 5.16)**
- *God, even when the days are long and the future seems uncertain, I will rejoice in your goodness. Amen.*

TUESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

- Let your gentleness be known. It can be difficult to define what it means to be gentle. In many cultures, "gentle" would be equated with "weak"; that's not the case with Jesus. What he modeled could be called a non-retaliatory spirit. He wasn't about winning arguments, he was about winning hearts. It was his strength. When has the gentleness displayed by yourself or someone near you opened doors to transformative conversations?

- **Prayer Prompt: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5.22)**
- *God, let the good fruit of your Spirit be seen in me. They are often counter to the way of the world, but I follow the Way of Christ. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

- Do not worry about anything. This doesn't mean that believers will live a carefree life. Followers of Jesus should care deeply about the people God has placed in our lives. It does mean that all concerns can be placed in the context of our trust in God. When have your worries seemed to tip the scales of your ability to trust in God? How do you return to confidence in God's ability to redeem even the worst of situations?

- **Prayer Prompt: Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? (Matthew 6.26-27)**
- *God, I know you care for me even more than you care for the birds. I confess my worry and give it now to you. I gain life by turning to you. Amen.*

THURSDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

- The peace of God guards your hearts and minds. What a beautiful image of God's protection for his children. In the middle of the biggest storm, there is peace to be found. We worship the Christ who calms the storm with a word, and that word is peace. What storms have you been through lately? Have you experienced a peace from God that guards your heart and mind? Cry out for it, it's available to you.

- **Prayer Prompt: Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. (2 Thessalonians 3.16)**
- *Lord God, the peace that you offer me to guard my heart and mind is a peace like none other. I confess that I seek peace in other places, but never have I found lasting peace apart from you. Thank you. Amen.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

- *whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about these things. If you could do an inventory of all the things your mind focuses on throughout the day, what would you discover? What percentage of your thinking is on worries you can’t control? What percentage is spent on regret? Read through the list of descriptions Paul gives us. Set your mind on them today. Come back to them as many times as you need.*

- **Prayer Prompt: Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3.2)**
- *God, I often lower my sights to small things of this world. Help me to look up to the things above—things that are from you. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

- The connection between doing and experiencing peace...Paul says if we put into practice the things he has taught and demonstrated, we will find peace. We are formed in practice. We often feel like we are not praying “right” or reading the Bible correctly or enough. But together, we practice, and we improve. Performance is not the goal, but practicing the way of Christ will always bring us greater peace. What spiritual practices bring you peace?

- **Prayer Prompt: Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14.19)**
- *God, our world is not at peace. There are pockets of peace, but we are overwhelmed by conflict. Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

In Sunday’s message, Jacob invited us to consider how we are looking at the world, and how we are responding. Answer the following questions as a guide:

Are you laughing as much as you once did?

Do you see more problems than you see promises?

Would the people who know you best see you as less negative and less critical than you once were?

Do you assume bad things will happen?

Do you magnify the negative and dismiss the positive?

if you had the chance would you avoid any interaction with humanity for the rest of your life?

- Reread Philippians 4.4-9. How does your faith influence how you interact with the world?
- How does the world respond to calm and non-anxious people of faith?