



WEEKLY STUDY

Finding Calm - Week 2

In week 2 of our study of Philippians 4.4-9, we focus on verses 6 and 7. We'll consider what it means to be people who are willingly and dependently asking God for help. God shows up in spaces and places where God is wanted. So we ask. Sometimes in the act of asking, we are transformed. May you experience a bit of that transformation this week as you read and pray with the church.

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 your church to have increasing boldness in laying our petitions before God.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.6-7 (NIV)

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- We tend to be pros at asking “What if...?” “What if he doesn’t make it?” “What if I can’t sleep tonight?” It comes from anxiety and it feeds anxiety. Paul calls us to prayer and petition. Petitions are specific. I need bread today God. I need help with this addiction. I need the words to say to my child who is hurting. What are some of the specific prayers you have for God today? See if this practice doesn’t begin to address your tendency to ask “What if?”
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- **Prayer Prompt: And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (1 John 5.15 KJV)**
- *God, would you align my desires with yours? I want to ask for the things that you already want me to have. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JAMES 1.5 (NIV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

- There’s a sense in which we already know what we need (or know that we don’t know what we need)...that’s wisdom. According to James, one of the best things to ask God for is wisdom. Wisdom will help to shape our prayer life and our sense of gratitude. Is there a life situation that has you particularly perplexed right now? Give it to God as you seek wisdom. Amen.
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- **Prayer Prompt: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1.7)**
- *God, I long for wisdom that informs my wants and needs and guides my asking. Please give me wisdom O Lord. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: NEHEMIAH 1.11 (NIV)

Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

- Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Babylon during the Exile of God’s people from the land God had given them. Upon hearing reports that Jerusalem was in bad shape, he wept and prayed that God would give him favor with the king whom he served. He already had in mind a mission to restore the walls and gates of Jerusalem. This was a specific prayer for favor on that day in the presence of the king who was in charge of his coming and going. Moments of desperation and risk can lead us to very specific prayers. Do you have a specific request of God that might help you achieve your purpose?

- **Prayer Prompt: The LORD is far from the wicked,**
- **but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15.29)**
- *God, I long to see the restoration you have promised. There are walls that have fallen around me, hear my prayer for favor that I might be a part of your restoration project. Amen.*

THURSDAY: 1 SAMUEL 1.11 (NIV)

And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

- Specific prayers do not always lead to the things we ask for, but they can work in our hearts to help us see God’s mercy and care for us. Hannah prayed for a son and promised to give him back to God. Often times the things we do receive from God lead us to give them away in gratitude and faithfulness. Have you received a blessing from God that you in turn gave back to him?

- **Prayer Prompt: Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6.38)**

- *Lord, I want to be a part of this beautiful cycle of giving and receiving with you. What you give to me is not really mine. Give me a generous and grateful heart. Amen.*

FRIDAY: JAMES 5.17-18 (NIV)

Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

- What a powerful prayer Elijah prayed ([see 1 Kings 17](#))! Elijah was a human being, yes, but he was also working within God's plan for his people. There is power in our earnest prayers when we abide with Jesus and seek to follow God's plan above all else. Has anyone ever commented to you on the power of prayer to change their circumstances? Has God used your prayers to bring about changes?

- **Prayer Prompt: "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." (1 Kings 17.1)**
- *God, I want to pray bold prayers that honor you and are aligned with your will. Speak to me and I will speak to you with all of the boldness I can muster! Amen.*

SATURDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-9 (NIV)

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.

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.

- Re-read the whole passage for this sermon series. What words stand out to you today? What is God saying to you through this word or phrase? Write your response to God below.

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- **Prayer Prompt: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4.4)**
 - *God, you are more faithful to speak than I am to listen. Train my heart to hear from you. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

This CALM tool from Max Lucado gives us a framework for living into a kind of holy calm. As a group, list ways that you already practice each of these four steps. List ways that you would like to live into them more deeply.

Celebrate God's goodness.
Ask for help.
Leave your concerns.
Meditate on good things.

Now discuss your responses to the following questions.

- Are your prayers specific about what you want God to do? If you asked the exact same thing of your closest friend, would they understand what you wanted them to do?
- What do you want God to do for you? Can you express it in clear and unambiguous terms?
- Write down the requests you want to present to God. As you write, consider, are they clear?