



WEEKLY STUDY

Finding Calm - Week 4

We are wrapping up our month-long exploration of Paul's words in Philippians 4.4-9. We've heard from many of you that this has been especially helpful to focus on the truths contained in this passage. As followers of Jesus, we operate differently than most of the world.

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 someone who seems to believe only the negative (or less true) things about themselves. Pray that God will show them how God sees them.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: 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.

- One last time in this series, we read this passage from Paul to the believers in Philippi. Everything we have read and studied feels very counter-cultural and even a little counter-intuitive. **Rejoice no matter what. Don't be anxious. God hears your petitions.** All amazing truths that we cling to. This week we look at the promise that God is always with us. Have you sensed the presence of God recently? Describe such a time below.

- **Prayer Prompt: So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. (Isaiah 41.10)**
- *God, even in times of trouble, you have never left me. Sometimes I fail to notice your presence, but you are always faithful. Thank you Lord. Amen.*

TUESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 10.5 (NIV)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- Sometimes our thought-life seems to have a mind of its own (pun intended!). Have you ever had a thought or an image come to mind and wonder to yourself, “Where did that come from?” We can usually shake those off and chalk them up to a bad day. But we are invited to take every thought captive and put it in the context of Christ. It can become a mental and spiritual exercise to put every thought under the Lordship of Christ. But it’s a good workout, and we can find freedom when our thoughts are held captive by Jesus Christ. What are some recent thoughts that have gone unfiltered and may be holding you captive? Imagine placing them under what you know about Jesus.

- **Prayer Prompt: for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1.9)**
- *God, I confess that my mind wanders and I can believe things about myself that are not true. Point me to my true identity in you. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ROMANS 12.1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- We are not stuck in a downward spiral. Our lives are never without hope. As Paul says here in Romans 12, even our minds can be made new. And with a renewed mind, we can begin to see God’s good, pleasing and perfect will for us! What are some of the patterns of this world that are keeping you from the transformation promised here?

- **Prayer Prompt: seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6.33)**
- *God, I want the freedom that comes through your perfect will for my life. Unchain me from the patterns of this world O Lord. Amen.*

THURSDAY: PSALM 23.4 (NIV)

*Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

- The steady truth of Scripture is that the Lord is near. We don’t have to be anxious—even in the darkest valley. Are there events or situations that are causing you anxiety today? List them below and then insert each one in this sentence, “Even though _____, I will fear no evil for you are with me...”

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- **Prayer Prompt: He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, (Psalm 91.15)**
 - *Lord, you have always been faithful to me. May I be faithful to call on you in every season. Amen.*

FRIDAY: JOSHUA 1.9, PSALM 46.1-3 (NIV)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

²*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

³*though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*

- This promise is repeated over and over in the Bible. It seems that God knows how forgetful we are, or how difficult of a lesson this is for us humans. Even when the world is falling apart, God is ever-present. We need the repetition of this promise because we can live differently in God's presence. How will you remind yourself of this promise today?
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- **Prayer Prompt: He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1.17)**
- *Lord God, When I read the news or see the misery of my neighbors, I can fall into despair. But you are holding all things together. So I place each one of these areas of fear into your hands. You can be trusted. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ZEPHANIAH 3.17 (NIV)

*The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”*

- There are competing images of God that circulate in the world today. What we need is to understand the fullness of God's heart for us. God does want to correct us when we are off-course. God wants us to walk in the way that leads to life. AND he wants to rejoice over us with singing! Write words of gratitude to God in the space below.

- **Prayer Prompt: the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. (Psalm 147.11)**
- *God, I will sing of your unfailing love for me, for you delight in me. I am fearfully and wonderfully made! Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

This CALM tool from Max Lucado gives us a framework for living into a kind of holy calm. The message this week focused on Meditating on good things

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

We have a lot of true and untrue stories that are constantly being told about us and the world around us.

- Take a moment to consider what stories are being told about you and to you. What do others see in you? (i.e. she is the athlete; he is always cracking jokes; she always wins; he is angry; she always comes in second place; he is the quiet one; she will never amount to anything; he is a successful businessman) Use the space below to record some of these things whether they are true or not.

- Now record which of these (or others) are the truest about you. **How can you set your mind on these things?** (i.e., I am a beloved child of God; I am a follower of Jesus; I am kind; I make mistakes; I depend on the grace of God; I am a dreamer)