

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 10.18.2020

WINNING THE BATTLE WITHIN! – Philippians 4:4-9

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

The truth is, many things can rob us of our joy and peace. Situations vary from day to day, as do our moods— that's why our source of rejoicing is not found in our circumstances, but in the unfailing character of our faithful God. Paul wrote these verses while in prison. Joy isn't about getting what you want; it's about being grateful for all you have in Christ. Paul went on to say, "Let your graciousness be known to everyone." The word for "graciousness" carries the idea of having a gentle spirit with others. It's the opposite of being contentious and self-seeking. Paul then added, "The Lord is near." The apostle may have been speaking of the Lord's return, or he may have been drawing attention to the fact that God is always nearby, ready to assist us. Both are certainly true! Christ's return should cause us to want to live holy lives every day, while knowing Christ is near should encourage us to call on Him for help. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What stood out or spoke to you most from Pastor Daniel's message this weekend?
2. Do you tend to be a worrier? How do you define peace?
3. Would you say you are at peace with God? With people? Explain.

## Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

1. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian congregation? (4:1)
2. Why did Paul plead with Euodia and Syntyche? (4:2)
3. What did Paul encourage his readers to do? (4:4)
4. How did Paul tell the Philippian Christians to treat others? (4:5)

It's also important to see that Paul didn't just tell the Philippians to rejoice; he told them to rejoice in the Lord. While most of the world looks to their circumstances for the source of their happiness, Christians look to what is absolutely unchanging—the Lord

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

1. How is worry a departure from trust in the character of God?

The kind of worry Paul referred to is the worry that deals with the future—something we don't possess. Negative anxiety can immobilize us and squeeze out our joy. Worries are like false prophets who tell us God isn't good, sovereign, or wise. Instead of worry, we are called to pray. Paul began his Letter to the Philippians with a joy-filled

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prayer (see Phil. 1:3-11); now, he instructed his readers to pray in the face of anxiety.

2. How does understanding that you don't possess the future—but that God does—help alleviate your worry?
3. How does prayer help us move from worry to trust?
4. How can praising God and choosing to be thankful help with worry?

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9**

1. Why does it matter what we think about? How does what you think about affect how you feel? How does it affect your relationship with God?
2. According to verse 8, what kinds of things are we supposed to dwell on or think about?
3. Where can these eight virtues Paul listed be found?

Paul addressed the Christian's thought life as a pathway to peace and joy. For Christians to grow in likeness to Jesus, we need a renewed mind (see Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23). Because David knew people had to change their thinking to accomplish real change, he prayed for God to examine his thoughts: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns" (Ps. 139:23). God has blessed His church with His Word as a primary means of purifying our minds. Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). We need God's Word to saturate our thoughts so that our minds may be renewed and we will be kept from grievous ways.

4. How do you react to reading the eight virtues Paul urges us to practice?

### **Applying God's Word**

**What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.**

**Paul urged the church to think on admirable things. He wanted disciples of Jesus to focus on what which is true, not false; honorable, not dishonorable; just, not unfair; pure, not obscene; lovely, not unlovely; commendable, not wrong; morally excellent, not corrupt; praiseworthy, not shameful. In addition to thinking praiseworthy thoughts, Paul also encouraged his readers to follow godly examples. In other words, emulate leaders who think holy thoughts. Imitate believers who set their minds on our Creator and Redeemer. Watch them. Pay attention to their views, what they read, what they talk about, and what they value. By doing so, Paul said we will know more of God's peace.**

1. How can you rejoice in the Lord this week regardless of circumstances? List specific examples.
2. What are your biggest challenges or anxieties right now? Make a list and pray daily about each one.
3. What are some darker thoughts currently in your mind that need to be replaced with something more noble? What are some ways you can renew your mind? Be specific.
4. Who is a trusted friend or mentor who can help you be accountable with your thoughts?

PRAYER - Use Philippians 4:6 as a guide to close with prayer. Lead a time of reflective, silent prayer, divided up into the categories of prayer Paul mentioned—praise, petition, and thanksgiving. Replace any harmful or sinful thoughts with thoughts of God's good and beautiful character. Ask the Lord to grant you His peace and graciousness.

*"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."  
(1 Peter 5:7)*