

# Philippians

Lesson 7

Chapter 4:10-23

Leader Guide

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## Lesson 7

### Philippians 4:10-23

### Guarding Our Hearts

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (*Philippians 4:7*)

#### Prayer

#### Introduction

After addressing a dispute between two women who worked with Paul, Paul closes his letter with wisdom that has inspired Christians for centuries. They are among the most familiar and encouraging verses in scripture:

Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:8 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.

Phil 4:11 for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Phil 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Is it hard to imagine Paul writing such encouraging words while facing death in prison? Yet, that is the power of faith in Christ. Through faith in Christ, we have complete assurance of forgiveness for our sins, and God who called us, guarded us, will keep us securely in his peace.

#### Read Philippians 4:2-9 Exhortations to Euodia and Syntyche

Phil 4:2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

Phil 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Phil 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers, 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.

Phil 4:9 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.

#### Discuss

1. We know nothing of Euodia and Syntyche except what is in verses 2-3. They labored together with Paul for the gospel's sake, and now they argued. The disagreement must have been significant to have reached Paul while imprisoned. We have seen this countless times while working on teams or committees – arguing, hurt feelings, then the cold shoulder, and finally, one or both quit. What practical advice in verses 2-5 does Paul give to resolve the division?
  - a. **Agree with each other for the sake of Christ**
  - b. **Set your division aside for the sake of unity in Christ**
  - c. **Use of a third party to resolve the dispute (the loyal yokefellow)**
  - d. **Focus on the goal, not the division and rejoice in the Lord**
  - e. **Be reasonable and settle the argument – let that be known to everyone!**
2. Rejoicing in the Lord in difficult circumstances is not easy – so difficult Paul says, “Rejoice!” twice in verse 4. Then he says an equally difficult thing – do not be anxious about anything, pray. What are some circumstances you find it difficult to give thanks and rejoice?

**Answers Vary**

3. How have you experienced the peace of the Lord that transcended all understanding that Paul refers to in verse 7?

**The peace of the Lord that transcends understanding comes in the face of trial when the circumstances are dire, but you are at peace because you know you are in God’s hands. I experienced this while traveling in New Zealand. I had a nice lunch in Queenstown and set off on a tour of locations where “Lord of the Rings” was filmed. About an hour later, I was in such pain that I could not go on with the tour. I didn’t know a gangrene gall bladder was poisoning my body, and I would be unconscious in less than 18 hours. Fortunately, the tour guide managed to get me back to my hotel when I collapsed into bed. The next morning, I went to the hospital. The local hospital could not operate on my gall bladder, so I was put in an ambulance and sent two hours away to a surgeon at the regional hospital. I could feel my consciousness slipping away. I felt that I would probably arrive at the hospital and be OK, but if not – I was at peace in God’s good and gracious hands, the peace that transcends all understanding.**

4. Philippians verse 4:8 is one of the most instructive scriptures in the Bible. My wife was an elementary school teacher and used the same technique with her kids (and sometimes with me). If the kids misbehaved, she would try to turn their attention to something more constructive. Paul is doing the same thing and says we should focus on excellent and praiseworthy things rather than sinful ones. What are some situations you could apply this advice to yourself?

**You name it, this verse applies! Grumbling, gossip, anger, coarse joking, sinful behavior, TV viewing, and internet use – to name a few. Sinful acts without repentance have serious consequences, as Paul warned the Galatians:**

**The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21).**

**All of the sins Paul mentions are forgivable, but repentance and asking to be forgiven come first.**

### **Read Philippians 4:10-23, Final Greetings**

Phil 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

Phil 4:11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Phil 4:12 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.

Phil 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Phil 4:14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

Phil 4:15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

Phil 4:16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

Phil 4:17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.

Phil 4:18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Phil 4:21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings.

Phil 4:22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

Phil 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

### **Discuss**

5. How had Paul's experiences taught him the extraordinary gift of being content in all circumstances (verses 11-13)?

**Paul discusses his trials in 2 Corinthians 11:23-33, flogging, beatings, stoning, shipwrecked, constant danger on the road and in the cities, hunger, sleeplessness, and prison. Paul was rescued in all these situations, sometimes miraculously and sometimes through the help of others – like the Philippians. Through all his experiences, he knew the peace of the Lord – that transcends all understanding.**

6. Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me," is one of the most popular verses in the Bible. What might Paul have been reflecting on as he wrote these words?

**Paul is likely thinking about the purpose given to him by Christ, to carry Jesus' name to the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel (Acts 9:15). Paul founded churches in Asia Minor and Greece and**

**witnessed the Holy Spirit's power working through him and bringing others to Christ. His confidence was not in himself but in the purpose that Christ sent him and empowered him to do.**

7. The Philippians were the most faithful church in their support of Paul's ministry. They looked after Paul's needs from their first meeting after his call to Greece and Macedonia to the end of his ministry in a Roman prison. They looked not only to his needs but also to the needs of the Jerusalem church. They gave generously, not out of their abundance but out of their faith in God's provision since they were in extreme poverty (2 Corinthians 8:2). What mission is God calling you to be a partner in? One of the tests of this calling will be your joy in it and your willingness to share it with others.

**Answers vary**

8. Regarding giving and receiving, Billy Graham said, "God has given us two hands, one to give with and the other to receive with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing. We are asked to do the former and promised the later."

- i. Why did Paul take joy in the Philippian's charity to him and others, verse 4:13-19?

**Paul received the gifts from the Philippians with gratitude. They came at times when he desperately needed them – again and again. But, the most important reason for his joy in their giving is the blessing they will receive for their generosity (verse 17).**

- ii. How do these verses influence your view of giving and receiving?

**These verses tell me we should be generous (without expecting anything in return). I should give to Christian organizations I am passionate about and establish a close relationship with them to know their needs and respond to them.**

9. "Brothers" is a general term Paul used for fellow Christians (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 6:23) and co-workers in Christ's mission (Philippians 4:21), whether male or female. We are brought into the family of God to become children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all loved by our heavenly Father and must love one another. Loving God and others is our high calling and the true measure of a follower of Jesus. How does Paul describe his love for his friends?

**Paul longed for his friends; they were his joy, crown, and beloved.**

10. Discuss the theme of Philippians that meant the most to you.
  1. God will complete his work in you (Philippians 1:6)
  2. Suffering and trials can have a great purpose (Philippians 1:12-14, 19-21)
  3. Heaven is our home; to live is to be in Christ, and to die is to be with Christ (Philippians 1:21-23, 3:20)
  4. Imitate Christ's humility and obedience (2:3-4)
  5. We have a great calling; press on toward the goal! (3:12-14)

6. Rejoice in the Lord in all circumstances (4:4)
7. The peace of God guards us (4:7)
8. Be healthy in your thoughts (4:8)
9. Giving and receiving (4:14-19)

## **Prayer and Blessing**