

The theme of Philippians is clearly joy. Keep in mind, more than a “book” in the New Testament, this was actually an epistle (letter) written by an aging Apostle Paul while under house arrest (for something he didn’t do) in Rome, circa 55 AD.

In this series we are exploring how that joy works out in 6 different ways.

1. Joy in Community
2. Joy in Bad Circumstances
3. Joy in Selflessness
4. Joy in Imperfections
- 5. Joy in Peace of Mind**
6. Joy in Strength

The greatest college basketball coach of all time said it best.

There are many things that are essential to arriving at true peace of mind, and one of the most important is faith, which cannot be acquired without prayer.

– John Wooden

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

– Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

These verses tell us that peace, and the accompanying joy, are not found in circumstances, stuff, or even relationships. It can only be found in a relationship with Christ.

Here are some guidelines to help you think through and even start the process of acquiring the concept of having the joy of a peaceful heart. As always, this is not a formula, just bullet points to help you think through the concept.

I. Recognize the Problem!

Worry is Wrong & Stupid!

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What is worry (or stress)? Here is a great description from one of my favorite preachers/writers.

The Greek word translated “anxious” (careful) in Philippians 4:6 means “to be pulled in different directions.” Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart! The Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means, “to strangle.” If you have ever really worried, you know how it does strangle a person! In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination.

– Warren Wiersbe

It's an over-concern for what “might” happen.

10 Reasons Why Worrying & Being Stressed Is Wrong!

1. It makes you feel bad. (It's consuming!)
2. It's Deceptive (It makes you feel like you're doing something! It's not productive!)
3. It doesn't change anything!
4. It becomes a habit. (A very destructive habit!)
5. It causes people to not want to be with you!
6. It makes you older before your time!
7. It makes you like every other heathen. (You are different—You serve an Almighty God!)
8. It's implying "I'm the master of my fate!"
9. It's a slap in the face to God!
10. It's sinful!

Read what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount.

²⁵"So my counsel is: Don't worry about *things*—food, drink, and clothes. For you already have life and a body—and they are far more important than what to eat and wear. ²⁶Look at the birds! They don't worry about what to eat—they don't need to sow or reap or store up food—for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. ²⁷Will all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸"And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don't worry about theirs. ²⁹Yet King Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they. ³⁰And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you, O men of little faith?

³¹⁻³²"So don't worry at all about having enough food and clothing. Why be like the heathen? For they take pride in all these things and are deeply concerned about them. But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, ³³and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.

³⁴"So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time.

– Matthew 6:25-34 (Living Bible)

II. Plug into the Cure

A Consistent & Detailed Prayer Life!

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Pray with Thanksgiving

⁶ ... in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving ...

Think about that, our prayers always need to include the ingredient of thanksgiving.

That always begs the question: "You mean I can't whine to God in my prayers?" Sure you can and should. (You should hear some of mine at times, all I needed was a little

cheese!) But when you whine, be thankful for what ever God is doing in your life. (Which doesn't mean you have to understand it.)

Pray with Specifics

⁶ ... in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

I'm constantly asked, "Should I pray to win, to get the deal, to be happy, etc." This verse clearly answers that with a resounding – YES!

Here's how one commentary puts it.

Paul exhorted the Philippians to prayer instead of anxiety. Praying with thanksgiving involves trusting God. Four words are used here to describe a believer's communion with God. **Prayer** describes a believer's approach to God. **Petition** emphasizes requesting an answer to a specific need. **Thanksgiving** is an attitude of heart, which should always accompany one's prayers. **Requests** speak of definite and specific things asked for.

– Bible Knowledge Commentary

III. Enjoy the Results

“Peace Beyond Description!”

⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

The product of a proper prayer life is peace! This isn't something we earn or connect the dots to get to, nor does it just happen. It's a product—a result—of a proper prayer life!!

How can I know if I have it? The churning will quit! The 'inner struggle' will cease.

Here's a description of a picture you might actually witness in the next day or so.

Picture of Peace

There is a picture of little bird in a tumultuous, raging storm. The wind is blowing, the rain is coming down almost horizontally. It's cold, wet, and windy!

On a limb of that tree is a small bird, shaking and wet. If you look real close, under the wing of that bird is a baby bird. The baby bird is warm, dry, and perfectly calm.

That's a picture of the follower of Christ. The Lord promises us He will cover us with His wing—in perfect peace.

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection. ⁵ Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day.

– Psalm 91:4-5 (NLT)

To discuss with those you are with today:

What's the craziest thing for which I have ever prayed?

Do I think I let the events of the day affect my mood or lack of peace?

Am I the same person no matter what's going on around me?

Talk about a time when you experienced a great peace and everything going on around you was a total mess. It was a peace that transcended all understanding.