**Title of Series****: Joy Amid Trials Date of Delivery: December 15, 2024**

**Lesson 7 of 7:** **Exhortations, Thanks for Gifts, and Final Greetings**

**Philippians 4:2-23**

**Series principal Bible verse**: Philippians 4:4 NIV “Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!”

**Lesson objective:** At the end of the lesson, the class will be able to discuss ways to have joy and contentment during trials.

**Special note to teachers:** This lesson does not require PowerPoint. There are reflection questions after each Main Point. Time may allow you to address both questions. You can choose the one to discuss with the class.

**Main Message –** Philippians is Paul’s joy letter and presents lessons on living in harmony, finding true contentment, and the assurance of God’s provision. The main message of Philippians 4 is to "rejoice in the Lord always" and to find peace in all circumstances through prayer and thanksgiving, even amidst challenges, by trusting in God's provision and relying on his strength to overcome anxieties and worries. In other words, regardless of the trials we face, we can find peace and contentment through Christ who strengthens us.

**Introduction:** Last week we discussed “Pressing on Toward the Goal.” Your homework was to dive deeper by reading Philippians 4:2-9 and write down three things that give you joy in the Lord. Who would like to share one of your joys? Today, we will conclude Philippians by looking at exhortations and Paul’s giving thanks for the gifts he received, and his final greetings.

Take a few responses from the audience and proceed to read the text.

**(Read out loud Philippians 4:2-23)**

**Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity**

**4**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

**2**I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. **3**Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

**Final Exhortations**

**4**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.

**Thanks for Their Gifts**

**10**I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. **11**I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **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. **13**I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

**14**Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. **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; **16**for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. **17**Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. **18**I have received full payment and have more than enough. 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. **19**And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

**20**To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Final Greetings**

**21**Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. **22**All God’s people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household.

**23**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%204&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29466a)]

**Main Point 1: Exhortations and Encouragements (verses 1-3)**

Paul encourages the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord. He pleads with Euodia and Syntyche, two women in the Philippian church, to live in harmony in the Lord. Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. He further enlists an unnamed true companion (potentially a church leader) to help these women, acknowledging their past labor in spreading the Gospel alongside him, Clement, and other fellow workers. There is no excuse for remaining unreconciled. It was necessary for Paul to seek the help of someone who could resolve their issues. We are not sure who visited with the ladies. Some scholars say it could have been Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of Paul in prison.

Reflection Questions

1. Who is the peacemaker in your family? What method is used to bring about peace?
2. How could the attitudes of these women harm the church?

**Main Point 2: Joy, Gentleness, and the Antidote to Anxiety (verses 4-7)**

Paul urges the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always and to let their gentleness be evident to all. He instructs them not to be anxious about anything but, in every situation, to present their requests to God through prayer and thanksgiving. He assures them that God's peace, which surpasses all understanding, will guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Paul bluntly told the Philippians to “stop worrying.” To worry is to display a lack of confidence in God’s care and in God’s control over the situation. See Matthew 6:25-34.

Reflection Questions

1. How can we put this into practice when faced with anxiety-provoking situations?
2. What in your mind or heart is unguarded and in need of the transcendent peace of God?

**Main Point 3: The Power of Right Thinking (verses 8-9)**

In these verses, Paul provides a list of virtues—true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy things—and urges the Philippians to think on these. He further exhorts them to put into practice what they have learned, received, and heard from him, promising that the God of peace will be with them. We are what we think. Paul tells us to program our minds—think critically. Examine what you are putting into your mind through television, the Internet, books, conversations, movies and magazines. Replace harmful input with wholesome material.

Reflection Questions

1. How can Paul's teachings in verses 8-9 help you deal with negative or unhelpful thoughts?
2. Is all social media bad for you?

**Main Point 4: Learning Contentment (verses 10-13)**

Paul acknowledges the Philippians' concern for him and commends them for reviving their concern. Paul wanted did not want to be accused of preaching only to get money. He accepted the Philippians’ gift because they gave it willingly and because he was in need. He shares his secret to being content in all circumstances, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want, through the strength he receives from Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. How does Paul's "secret" of contentment challenge the societal understanding of happiness and satisfaction?
2. Can you recall a time in your life when you experienced contentment in a difficult situation, much like Paul?

**Main Point 5: Gratitude for the Philippians' Gifts (verses 14-23)**

Paul expresses gratitude for the Philippians' support in his times of need and acknowledges the sacrificial gifts they had sent. He assures them that his God will meet all their needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus. Let think about money for a moment. Money measures our energy and represents our day-to-day security. When we give to those in need, it benefits the receiver, and it also benefits us as well. Paul appreciated the Philippians’ gift, but their spirit of love and devotion as well.

Philippians 4 serves as the closing chapter of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians. Written during his imprisonment in Rome, Paul's closing remarks stress the importance of unity, peace, contentment, prayer, and God's everlasting provision. These lessons remain relevant to modern believers, guiding us in maintaining our Christian faith amid the varying circumstances of life.

Reflection Question

1. How can the themes of unity, joy, contentment, prayer, and God's provision apply to the challenges in your life today?
2. What role does community play in your spiritual life, in light of the communal aspects presented in Philippians 4?

**Conclusion:** The Philippian church was a model congregation. There were many kinds of people who were learning to work together. Paul recognized problems could arise, so in his thank-you letter, he prepared the Philippians for difficulties that could crop up within a body of believers. Even though Paul was in prison, he learned the true secret of joy and peace—imitating Christ and serving others.

**Call to action:** Take a moment this week to evaluate your wants and needs. If you want more, ask God to remove that desire and teach you how to be satisfied in every circumstance. By focusing our mind on Christ, we will learn unity, humility, joy and peace. We will be motivated to live for him. “May the grace of the lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” Philippians 4:23