

Paul's Joyful Letter to the *Philippians*

CHAPTER 4: THE SECURE MIND

God's Peace (4:1-9)

- 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! Out of Paul's love for the Philippians ^{Philippians 1:8}, he taught them how to live for God by having a singular, submissive and spiritual mind. Here, Paul specified how to have a secure mind: a person must "stand firm in the Lord" ^{Exodus 14:13, Proverbs 10:25, 1 Corinthians 16:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:15, James 5:8}. He explained to the Ephesians that wearing God's armor enables a Christian to stand firm ^{Ephesians 6:10-18}. Paul also emphasized many times that his "joy and crown" ^{1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Thessalonians 2:19} were those people he helped in the Lord, in fact, they were the "seal of [his] apostleship to the Lord" ^{1 Corinthians 9:2}.
- 4:2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to (agree with each other) ¹ in the Lord. [¹*phroneo*: harmony] Paul desired oneness "in spirit" ^{Philippians 2:2}, pointing out how disagreement produces disharmony and detracts from the focus of the church (unless the disparity involves compromise of God's principles ^{Acts 17:11}).
- 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel ², along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book ³ of life ⁴. [²*euaggelion*: good news; ³*biblos*: Egyptian papyrus used to make a scroll; ⁴*zoe*: life in spirit and soul] Paul expressed appreciation for the believers who supported him while he was in prison ^{Philippians 2:25} and confidence that they were all eternally secure in their salvation ^{Psalms 69:27-28, Revelation 3:4-5, 17:8, 20:12,15}.
- 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! A hallmark of being a Christian should be an attitude of rejoicing ^{Psalms 85:6, 97:12, Habakkuk 3:18, Matthew 5:12, Romans 12:12, Philippians 3:1}, independent of circumstances.
- 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all ⁵. The Lord is near ⁶. [⁵*anthropos*: man, distinct from God and animals; ⁶*eggus*: near in time and space] Paul encouraged Christians to be gentle as part of being ready ^{1 Peter 3:15} to be a witness. Saints are fortified by the fact that God is with them (near spatially ^{Psalms 119:151, 145:18}) and exhorted to have a sense of urgency, because He's coming soon (near in time ^{Hebrews 10:37, James 5:8-9}).

Right Praying (4:6-7)

4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition ⁷, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. [⁷*deesis*: supplication] The word translated as “anxious” means “to be pulled in different directions”, which is an accurate description, because trust in God draws a Christian (their soul) one way, while the fears from Satan, the world and their flesh pushes them in other ways (James refers to this as being “double-minded” ^{James 1:5-8}). Everyone experiences worry, but the issue at hand should be immediately brought before God in prayer ^{Ephesians 5:19-20}, because worry is antithetical to genuine Christian faith ^{Matthew 6:25-34}. Calling out to the Lord and turning over responsibility for life difficulties in fervent, heartfelt prayer ^{Ephesians 6:18} indicates trust in Him ^{John 14:1-3} (the Sovereign God of the universe ^{Psalms 71:5-8}), and He will then provide strength ^{Ephesians 6:10-13}, joy ^{1 Thessalonians 5:16-18} and even peace ^{v.7}. Paul made it clear what Christians should do when they are overcome with anxiety: Pray! In addition, he described the three elements of earnest prayer: prayer (this word refers to the adoration, devotion and worship of God), petition (includes bringing to Him sins and concerns for self and others) ^{Romans 15:30, Colossians 4:12}, and thanksgiving (gratefulness for always living up to His promises) ^{Colossians 3:15-17}.

4:7 And the peace ⁸ of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [⁸*eirene*: the absence of strife] The word “guard” is a military term meaning “to keep watch over”. When a person becomes a Christian by accepting Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, He grants them “peace with God” ^{Romans 5:1-2}, which is a sign of eternal security. However, the believer can also receive the “peace of God” that will enable them to live an earthly life of calmness, even in the most difficult trials. This peace is granted to saints who consistently submit to Him through prayer, study and service.

Right Thinking (4:8)

4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure ⁹, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. [⁹*hagnos*: impurity free] In order to gain a secure mind, Christians must decisively allow Christ to capture their thoughts ^{2 Corinthians 10:5} through the power of the Holy Spirit ^{Romans 8:5-6}. What will result is a mind filled with the best of things ^{Psalms 19:7-11}, instead of a mind corrupted ^{2 Corinthians 11:3} by the great liar Satan ^{John 8:44}.

Right Living (4:9)

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 ⁸ will be with you. Paul summarized the path to a secure mind (indicated by the statement: “the God of peace...with you” ^{Romans 15:33}): a saint must live righteously ^{Proverbs 20:7} (doing God’s will ^{Matthew 12:50}) by following the examples ^{John 14:12} and teachings ^{John 15:14, James 1:22} of Jesus Christ.

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The following is a detailed explanation of the multiple meanings of the word "peace" in the Bible:

- † The peace Jesus spoke of following the Last Supper ^{John 14:27} is an inner peace that can be experienced by people on earth on two levels of intensity:
1. The "peace with God" ^{Job 22:21, Romans 5:1} is another way of expressing the reconciliation with God ^{Romans 5:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21} that, along with the Holy Spirit ^{1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13-14}, is a free eternal gift to each genuine believer ^{John 3:1-8} at the time of their salvation.
 2. In addition to peace with God, the passionate, dedicated Christian can also obtain the "peace of God" ^{Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:15-17}. They gain this peace by becoming a disciple of Christ ^{Matthew 28:18-20}, investing their life in sincere prayer ^{Colossians 4:2, James 5:13-16}, earnestly studying the Scriptures ^{John 14:23-24, Romans 16:25-27, 1 John 5:3}, practicing sacrificial service for Jesus ^{Matthew 25:31-36, Galatians 5:22-23, 1 John 3:16-20}, and developing a willingness to fully trust in Jesus ^{Isaiah 26:3} (i.e., cling to the Word of God and know He responds to Christians' prayers).
- † The peace that Jesus denied bringing with Him when He was instructing His Twelve before they were sent out on a mission ^{Matthew 10:34-38}, was an outer peace between people. This peace cannot always exist between the First & Second Coming of Jesus, because the "peace with God" Jesus brought to the world created a clear choice that naturally divides people. However, following His Second Coming, Jesus will bring the peace for all creatures ^{Isaiah 11:6-9} to the earth for the thousand years of the Millennium ^{Revelation 20:4}. This peace will be a foreshadowing of the eternal peace within and between all who will be in the New Heaven ^{2 Peter 3:11-13, Revelation 21:1-2}. So for now, God calls His followers to promote peace ^{Matthew 5:9, 1 Corinthians 7:15, 14:33a, Romans 12:18, 14:19, Psalm 34:14, Hebrews 12:14}, but warns them that they will not always be successful.