



# PHILIPPIANS

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**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; Philippians 4:6**

This is one of the more difficult exhortations Paul passes on to us. We are tied to this world and we are continuously moving forward in the stream of time, not knowing what lies even one second ahead. Trials, troubles, and tribulations enter into our lives and we have no way of knowing how they will turn out. And yet, Paul asks us to “Be anxious for nothing.” Surely this takes great effort, and yet it is possible.

Anxiety is the state of fear of the unknown and how that unknown will affect us personally. But the Bible reveals that nothing is truly unknown. God has laid out time before us, but He is outside of time. He knows what is coming, and He has already given us the final words of Scripture to prove it. Because of this, and if we can truly hold on to this, we can act in accord with Paul's words now.

Instead of being anxious, we are to come to God “in everything by prayer and supplication.” In the Greek, both words “prayer” and “supplication” have an article in front of them. Thus, both are distinct things, and yet they are inseparable. Prayer is a word more general in meaning. On the other hand, supplication is a specific petition. The two together should form the basis of all of our communication with the Lord. We are to pray our general thoughts, and we are to note specific items which are upon our heart through supplication.

And in addition to this, we are to do it “with thanksgiving.” Whereas the “prayer” and the “supplication” are in the singular, the word “thanksgiving” is in the plural. We are to open our mouths with “thanksgivings” to God, both for those things we have been given, and also for

the opportunity to lay before Him those things which we hope for. It is in this way that we are to let our “requests be made known to God.” We are to lay our hearts out to Him and hold nothing back as if it is too small and trivial to pester him with, or too great to weary Him with. In all things, we are to so come before God.

Life application: If you struggle with anxiety, what should you do about that? Do exactly the same thing that you are instructed to do with all other things – bring it before God. Even the issue by which we are directed to make our prayers is something that we can pray about.

**...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.** Philippians 4:7

Paul’s words now are written as a prescription containing the medicine for the anxious soul of the previous verse. With the knowledge of what Christ has done, and of what He promises for us because of what He has done, instead of being anxious we have the ability to receive “the peace of God.” It is true that we cannot see the future as it unfolds before us, but we can see the ultimate end which is promised to us. Because of this, if we can just keep our eyes on what we know lies ahead because of Christ, we should be able to obtain and live in this peace.

It is a peace which was promised in the Old Testament countless times. Isaiah records that it was available in the Lord –

“You will keep *him* in perfect peace,  
*Whose mind is stayed on You,*  
Because he trusts in You.” Isaiah 26:3

When Christ came, the promise was repeated for those who looked for the coming Messiah. Upon His birth, the peace long-promised had taken human form –

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Luke 2:14

And after His work was almost complete, Christ Jesus promised this same peace to those who followed Him –

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

It is a peace, as Paul notes, “...which surpasses all understanding.” It could never have been conceived of by man that complete and total restoration with God would come. Man could

never have believed that what Christ did would absolutely assure us of a state where anxiety and conflict with God would be eradicated. But in Christ it has come. Even now for the believer, if we try to get our minds around what the work of Christ has accomplished and what it promises, we simply cannot.

Why would God have done what He did in Christ? It is mind boggling. And how could such marvelous assurances be granted to us when we continue to stray from His word, even after having received Jesus as Lord? It is astonishing. Truly such peace surpasses all understanding! And yet, because it is true, it is able “to guard your hearts and minds.”

A guard is a sentinel. It is one who watches out for dangers, sounds the alarm, and defends against the onslaught of the enemy. This is what the peace of God can do for us if we simply trust in Him. We can look beyond the trials which afflict us, and we can have the assurance that whatever they may be, they are temporary and futile in stealing us away from the sure promises which are ours to claim “through Christ Jesus.”

This final term is the key to the entire thought. It is only through Christ Jesus that this peace is attainable. It is He who died for the atonement of our sins. It is He who was resurrected unto eternal life, being found without sin. And it is He who guarantees these things to us when we are found in Him. We can have the absolute confidence that God’s word is true, and that His promises are sure because Christ Jesus has gone before us.

Life application: If you really believe the message of Christ, then you can cast all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you. The peace of God can, in fact, fill you completely and absolutely if you simply meditate on what His work means for you. Allow yourself to be filled with this peace. Christ has prevailed. What can the world do to us?

**Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.**  
Philippians 4:8

Once again, as in verse 3:1, Paul uses the word “finally.” Unlike there though, he is truly concluding his epistle; giving the final closing thoughts to his beloved church in Philippi. Again as in 3:1, he calls them “brethren.” He is showing his fraternal love for them in this manner. It is, therefore, a call that his coming words are to be taken in that light. He wants them to understand that just as he would pursue certain things with his walk, this is what he wants them to do also. They are united in Christ and should all conduct their affairs in that manner.

With this in mind, he next says, “whatever things *are* true.” In the world there is truth, and then there is falsehood. Quite often that which is false seems easier to comply with, or maybe easier to digest. But such an expediency is never the appropriate path to follow. The Greek word is an adjective which gives the sense of “*attested* because *tested* – literally, ‘what can't be hidden’” (HELPS Word Studies). It is found in the book of John more than any other book. Jesus used the word many times, highlighting that truth is a most important aspect of our understanding of that which is correct to follow.

Following this he says, “whatever things *are* just.” The word in Greek gives the sense of that which is honorable. It is used four times in the New Testament, only by Paul, and this is its only use outside of the pastoral epistles. HELPS Word Studies defines it as, “...what is august (dignified, has ‘gravitas’); weighty, deeply respected because viewed as majestic (having ‘gravity’); grave.” Such things are in contrast to that which is lowly and indecent, even depraved.

He next says, “whatever things *are* pure.” Again, HELPS Word Studies provides us with the intent behind the word. It means “*pure* (to the *core*); *virginal* (chaste, unadulterated); pure *inside and out*; *holy* because *uncontaminated* (undefiled from sin), i.e. without spoilation even within (even down to the center of one's being); not *mixed* with guilt or anything condemnable.”

Following this, he says, “whatever things *are* lovely.” This word is found only here in the Bible. Vincent’s Word Studies defines it as, “Adapted to excite love, and to endear him who does such things.”

He then goes on to, “whatever things *are* of good report.” This also is a word found only here in the New Testament, and it means something which is spoken in a charitable spirit, worthy of praise, and of good reputation.

From there he goes on to note, “if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy.” The first word, translated as “virtue,” is used only here by Paul, but Peter uses it in both of his epistles. It speaks of that which is of moral virtue and even excellence; perfection. The second thought, which is translated as “worthy of praise,” is well-translated. It indicates something truly laudable.

In all of the things he has stated, he sums up with the words, “meditate on these things.” It is to be the Christian's duty to carefully think on, and pay attention to, each of these things. We are to direct our minds on such things and not to anything which opposes them. If we do this, then our hearts and minds will be properly influenced, and our lives will be led in a manner which is acceptable to the Lord.

Life application: Go back and read the words of this verse. Think on them today. As you do, take time to consider what they are saying. Should negative thoughts come your way, redirect your mind based on what Paul exhorts here. In the future, continue to follow this pattern. You will grow in holiness and in a life which is glorifying of the Lord.

**The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.** Philippians 4:9

Paul again calls attention to the need for following the example he has set down. He did this in verse 3:17, and now he continues to exhort this to his readers at Philippi (and thus us!) by saying, "The things which you learned and received." These are the things he would have directly instructed them through this and any other epistle, and also anything they would have heard from him as personal instruction while he was with them. They are the things he received by revelation, and which he would then have instructed them, explaining that they are the words of the Lord. They learned from him, and they received it as under the authority he claimed.

He then says, "and heard and saw in me." These are the things they would have noted about him personally. He gave instruction, but did he live in accord with the words he spoke? When a pastor instructs someone to avoid sexual sin, does he then go out and engage in sexual sin? Paul conformed his life to what he received from the Lord. Therefore, his words were conformed to what he instructed, and his actions conformed to that as well.

Because of this, he exhorts them by saying, "these do." In essence, "As you have learned from me, as you have received from me by what I taught, as you have heard my words, and as you have watched my actions... all of these you are to likewise follow." In doing this, there will be a reward. Compliance does not lead to a dull existence, but it generates a glorious relationship in that "the God of peace will be with you."

There is an inversion here from the words of verse 4:7. There it said, "the peace of God." Here it says, "the God of peace." God left us His peace through Christ Jesus, but He did not leave us in the process. We have more than a simple token left behind; we have the Giver of the token dwelling among us and in us when we conduct our lives in accord with what He has revealed.

The opposite will then be true. If we fail to do follow in these things, we will have neither the peace of God to guide us, nor will we have the God of peace with us. Instead, we will have nothing but trials, anxieties, and frustrations on the one hand, and no fellowship to comfort us on the other. What a price to pay for being disobedient children!

Life application: If you want the peace of God, and the God of peace to guide you and be with you, then pay heed to His word in your life, apply His word to your life, and set your eyes on what lies ahead of this life. By living out the faith that you profess, the peace you seek from the God you seek will be yours.

**But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.** Philippians 4:10

Paul now refers to the giving by the saints in Philippi for his needs. However, despite it having come from them and their labors, he ascribes it to having come from the Lord. He says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly." He moves the gratitude up to the place from which it originally stems. It is not in any way a lessening of his thanks to them, but rather a highlighting of it. If someone compliments a preacher on a great sermon, he does well to say, "Then give the glory to the Lord." He is acknowledging the Source of the goodness which they received. The same is true with Paul's words now.

Understanding this, he then says, "that now at last your care for me has flourished again." The word he uses is found only here in the New Testament, and it signifies "to revive." It is what happens with the trees in spring as they sprout new leaves and revive in the warm sun and refreshing showers. It would be what a pot of flowers would do which was deprived of water, but which revived as it received water once again. Paul is saying that the care of him by the Philippians was received by him; their care has revived him in this manner because of it.

He then acknowledges that the deprivation of their care was not of their making, or because of a lack of attention to him. Rather, he says, "though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity." The distance to reach him, the sickness of Ephaphroditus, possibly because of his incarceration making it impossible, and so forth, all led to this inability of them to tend to him. However, that was now past.

Life application: Sometimes we may take things in the wrong way when we do not hear from another person for some amount of time, or because they have not attended to us in the way that was normal in the past. In such instances, the reason may be something wholly unexpected, and so it is best to not let such lapses cause an unnecessary division. Instead, we need to handle them with care and hopefully find out the reason for them in a godly and patient manner.