

**Introduction: Three approaches to peace**

- Inward
- Outward
- Upward

**The world's peace**

The absence of disturbance and hostility, free from internal and external strife.

**God's peace: Shalom**

1. Complete soundness or wholeness of health
2. Harmony in relationships
3. Success and fulfillment of purpose
4. Victory over one's enemies

*<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

*Jesus of Nazareth – John 14:27*

**With what one person would you most like to be at peace?**

**Choosing peace in relational conflict**

Philippians 4:1-5

**The context:**

*<sup>1</sup> 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!*

Philippians 4:1

**The plea for unity:**

*<sup>2</sup> I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.*

Philippians 4:2

**The request for competent counsel:**

*<sup>3</sup> Yes, and I ask you, my true yokefellow, to help these women who have [contended] with me for the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

Philippians 4:3

**The command concerning relational focus:**

*<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

Philippians 4:4

**The command concerning personal responsibility:**

*<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

Philippians 4:5

## I Choose Peace (Part 1)

## In Relational Conflict Philippians 4:1-5

### 5 ways to diffuse relational conflict:

1. Resolve to stop PROCRASTINATING.  
Philippians 4:1
2. Re-evaluate your EXPECTATIONS.  
Philippians 4:2
3. Get competent, outside HELP.  
Philippians 4:3
4. Refuse to allow ONE relationship to ruin your life.  
Philippians 4:4
5. Remember a right RESPONSE is more important than being RIGHT.  
Philippians 4:5

**Discussion Questions:**

1. On a scale of 1-10, rank the level of stress and concern you are currently experiencing from any problem relationship.
2. Why does relational conflict rob us of peace? What price are you paying to allow this to continue?
3. What specific steps does the apostle Paul give to help resolve relational conflict? List them and discuss each.
4. Is there a relationship in your life that calls for you to follow this pattern? When and how will you follow God's plan for peace (as far as it depends on you)?
5. Who could help you turn your good intention into action this week?

**Resources:**

*Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*

by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Greeny,  
Ron McMillan, Al Switzler

**Introduction:**

**Jesus' promise:**

*<sup>33</sup> These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

John 16:33

- What exactly is anxiety?
  
- What causes anxiety?
  - Fear of the future
  - Conflict in the present
  - Regrets over the past
  
- How does anxiety affect us?

**How can we overcome anxiety?**

**Choosing God's peace when anxiety strikes**

Philippians 4:6-7

*<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

Nothing be anxious about

But in everything

- by prayer
- by petition
- with thanksgiving
- the requests of you let be made known to God.

And the peace of God



(surpassing all understanding)

will guard the hearts of you

and

the thoughts of you

in Christ Jesus

**The Commands = the What:**

1. Negatively =
2. Positively =

**4 Key Words = the How:**

1. **PRAYER** = worship and adoration.
2. **PETITION** = focus on your needs.
3. **THANKSGIVING** = focus on what God has done.
4. **REQUESTS** = outline your specific requests.

**The Promise = the Why:**

1. Peace and anxiety cannot **COEXIST**.
2. Anxiety and biblical prayer cannot **COEXIST**.

**Summary:** Biblical **PRAYER** is God's antidote to anxiety.

This week, every time you feel anxious, remember the following word picture...

When **ANXIETY** pounds at the door of your heart, let **PRAYER** answer it as you **RUN** into your Father's arms!

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. When do you tend to be anxious?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the issues in your life that are “strangling” and “stressing” you mentally and emotionally?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How will you put this message into practice? Who will help/encourage you in your battle to overcome anxiety?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Is there a relationship in your life that calls for you to follow this pattern? Who in your relationship network struggles with anxiety and needs your help?



**Introduction: Are you feeding or starving your fear?**

**University of Tennessee – 12 year study:**

Psychologically: “We are what we eat”

Negative Thinking → Fearful Emotions → Ungodly Behavior → Devastating Consequences

**OR**

Positive Thinking → Peaceful Emotions → Godly Behavior → Fruitful Consequences

**Summary: Science and Scripture agree**

1. We are a product of our **THOUGHT** life. Proverbs 23:7
2. Our **EMOTIONS** flow from our thought life. Romans 8:6
3. What we allow to enter our mind is the most important **DECISION** we make each and every day. Romans 12:2

**Question:** How can we choose peace in a broken world?

**Answer:**

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

*<sup>9</sup> The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:8-9

**Command #1:** **DWELL** on these things...

Philippians 4:8

**True:** Objectively true, that which conforms to reality vs. things that are deceptive, illusions that promise peace and happiness.

**Pre-view question:** Is this **TRUE** or **FALSE**?

**Honorable:** “Sober”, “serious”, “worthy of respect”, “inspires awe” – it refers to those things which reflect the weighty purposes of a believer’s life.

**Pre-view question:** Does this **HONOR** or **DISHONOR**?

**Right:** “Righteous”; used in New Testament to refer to the Father, Jesus, God’s actions, God’s character. It pictures doing what is right when tempted.

**Pre-view question:** Is this morally **RIGHT** or **WRONG**?

**Pure:** From the same root word as “holy.” It means free from defilement; sexual and moral purity in thought, word, and deed.

**Pre-view question:** Will this CLEANSE or DIRTY my soul?

**Lovely:** “Attractive”, “winsome”, “beautiful”; it pictures those things that call forth a response of love and warmth within us vs. bitterness, criticism and vengeance.

**Pre-view question:** Will this RENEW or HARDEN my heart?

**Good Repute:** That which is “commendable”, “gracious”, “admirable”; it literally means “fair speaking.” **It describes the things which are fit for God to hear** vs. ugly words, false words, and impure words.

**Pre-view question:** Could I RECOMMEND this to someone who looks up to me?

**Summary: Virtue and/or Praise:** A summary of sorts to “think on” anything that has moral excellence and will inspire and motivate us to love God and others...

**Command #2:** Habitually PRACTICE these things...

Philippians 4:9a

- Learned... Received:      Appetite and application
- Heard... Saw:              Instruction and modeling

**Why?** Your thought life determines your FUTURE.

Romans 8:5-8

**How?** The principle of mind RENEWAL.

Romans 12:2

## I Choose Peace (Part 3)

In a Broken World  
Philippians 4:8-9

**Promise:** The God of peace (shalom) will be **WITH YOU**.

Philippians 4:9b

### 21 Minutes that will change your life:

- |                                                   |            |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. <b>Read:</b> The Bible                         | 10 minutes |
| 2. <b>Pray:</b> Talk with God                     | 7 minutes  |
| 3. <b>Listen:</b> Sit quietly and listen          | 3 minutes  |
| 4. <b>Apply:</b> One specific truth/serve someone | 1 minute   |

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does our thought life affect our emotions?
2. How would you describe the quality of your thought life? What adjustments do you sense God would have you make in what you **view**, **read**, and **think**?
3. Why is **habitual practice** of the truth so vital if we are to experience God's peace? Why does "duplicity" create stress and lack of peace in our lives?
4. What insight has God given you today to help you experience His **peace** in your life? How will you choose to cooperate with God's process in your life? Who will help you?

### Resources:

*Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*  
*Good to Great in God's Eyes*  
*Topical Memory System*

by Robert Morgan  
by Chip Ingram (Chapter 1 – "Think Great Thoughts")  
by The Navigators Press

**Introduction: What would it take for you to be content?**

**Definition:** Content - Happy enough with what one has or is; not desiring something more or different; satisfied.

Webster's Dictionary

**The Problem:** The horizon is always moving.

**Two Historical Solutions:**

1. Conquer, achieve, and acquire until satisfied.
2. Desire less and less until it doesn't matter.

**The Question:** How can we be satisfied...today?

- **The Answer:** Philippians 4:10-13

- **The Occasion:** A “Thank You” Note

*“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.”*

Philippians 4:10

*“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”*

Philippians 4:11

*“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.”*

Philippians 4:12

*“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”*

Philippians 4:13

- **The Conclusion:** Contentment is not a thing to be achieved, but a secret to be discovered.
- **How?**

## Four Principles – Four Practices:

- **Principle #1** - Our contentment is not dependent on our circumstances.
  - Practice = **BE THANKFUL / GRATEFUL** Philippians 4:10
  
- **Principle #2** - Contentment is an attitude we learn not a thing we achieve.
  - Practice = **BE TEACHABLE** Philippians 4:11
  
- **Principle #3** - Prosperity does not have the power to give us contentment; nor poverty the power to take it away.
  - Practice = **BE FLEXIBLE / CHANGEABLE** Philippians 4:12
  
- **Principle #4** - Only Christ has the power to give us a contentment that transcends all life's variables.
  - Practice = **BE CONFIDENT / TRUSTING** Philippians 4:13

**Conclusion:**

Contentment is not passive acceptance of the status quo, but the positive assurance that God has supplied one's needs, and the consequent release from unnecessary desires.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why is it so difficult to be genuinely content? What factors in our world make this so? What factors in our hearts make this so?
2. Why are both historical positions toward contentment doomed to failure?
3. Walk through each of the principles and practices and discuss how they relate to your present circumstances and attitudes about personal peace.
4. What action step will you take to reflect obedience to God's provision for your personal peace?
5. Take time to pray for one another in your group. Ask God to help each one to embrace His game plan for a life of personal peace.



### **Introduction: “A scouting report”**

*<sup>5</sup>[False teachers produce men] of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.*

*<sup>6</sup>But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup>For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup>But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*

*<sup>9</sup>People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

*<sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

1 Timothy 6:5-10

### **Four Questions:**

1. **Who** is our foe?
2. **How** formidable is our foe?
3. **What** are his tactics?
4. **Where** are we vulnerable to attack?

**Question:** How can we break greed's grip on our lives?

**Answer:** The Philippian Model

Philippians 4:14-18

### **Three Principles – Three Practices:**

**Context:**

Philippians 4:10-13

- **Step #1: Develop PERSONAL COMPASSION – How?**

➤ By putting others' needs ahead of our wants.

*<sup>14</sup> Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup> 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;*

Philippians 4:14-15

- **Step #2: Develop a GENEROUS SPIRIT – How?**

➤ By releasing the very thing that has power to consume us.

*<sup>16</sup> ...for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.*

Philippians 4:16

- **Step #3: Develop an ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE – How?**

➤ By understanding the inseparable relationship between our money and authentic worship.

*<sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> 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.*

Philippians 4:17-18

## Conclusion: “Scouting Recommendations”

*<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to **put their hope in God**, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*

*<sup>18</sup> Command them **to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.** <sup>19</sup> In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

1 Timothy 6:17-19

## Four Commands:

1. Put your **HOPE** in God.
2. Be **RICH** in good deeds.
3. Be **GENEROUS**.
4. Be willing to **SHARE**.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss the “scouting report” on contentment’s greatest competitor. What makes him such a formidable foe?
2. The theme of the book of Philippians is joy. Discuss why the Philippian Model (4:14-18) might produce joy and personal peace.
3. Discuss whether greed delivers on its promise to make us happy.
4. Share honestly an area in which greed has crept into your heart and thinking.
5. What practical steps are you going to take to follow the Philippian Model toward personal peace?

**Introduction: The contentment check list**

1. Contentment is **learned**, not **achieved**. Philippians 4:10-13
  
2. Greed must **die** before contentment can **live**. Philippians 4:14-18  
Luke 16:10-13

**How?**

- Develop Personal **COMPASSION**
  - Develop a **GENEROUS** Spirit
  - Develop an **ETERNAL** Perspective
- 
3. Our treasure both **reveals** and **directs** the affections of our hearts. Matthew 6:21

**The Problem: What about me?**

**The Solution:**

*“And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”*

Philippians 4:19

- **The Promise:** **GOD’S PROVISION**
- **The Premise:** for believers
  1. This is not for unbelievers.
  2. This is not for all believers.
  3. This is only for believers who choose to walk by faith.

**The Principle: The Law of the HARVEST**

- Explained Luke 6:38
- Illustrated in Nature John 12:24
- Applied to Jesus Philippians 2:8-11
- Applied to Us Luke 9:24

***“You Never Reap in the Same Season that You Sow”***

**The Process:**

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

- **The Principle Restated:** When you have a need,  
**PLANT A SEED.**

*<sup>6</sup>Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

2 Corinthians 9:6

- **The Procedure Outlined:** Give with the right **MOTIVE.**

*<sup>7</sup>Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

- **The Promise Expanded:** God will give you **EVERYTHING**  
you need in **EVERY** area of your life.

*<sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

*<sup>9</sup>As it is written: "He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."*

*<sup>10</sup>Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*

*<sup>11</sup>You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

2 Corinthians 9:8-11

**The Practice: God's Challenge to You**

***Test Me!      Try It!      I Dare You!***

*<sup>10</sup>"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. . . **Test Me** in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it!"*

Malachi 3:10

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, choose to take God up on His challenge-promise and trust Him to meet all my needs. I take this step by committing the first \_\_\_\_\_% of my income to the Lord for the next 90 days.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signed*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the relationship between experiencing personal peace and living by faith?
2. Why is giving such an integral part of activating the "faith component" in our lives?
3. In what area of your life do you have a great need? What would "planting a seed" look like in this area?
4. Share the specific step of faith or obedience God has directed you to take.