

***Prayer: the Secret of Power***

*Philippians 4:6-7: Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NASU*

Paul's instructions to rejoice always, pray about everything, and not worry about anything are all-encompassing. There are no exceptions to rejoicing, praying, and avoiding worry. However, it's important to note that Paul is not suggesting that we should ignore the realities of life, pretend that everything is perfect, or deny the existence of sin in the world. Instead, he encourages us to bring everything, including our concerns, fears, and challenges, to the Lord in prayer. We are invited to have an open and honest dialogue with God, seeking His guidance, comfort, and peace in all circumstances. *Daniel 3:15-17; Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Peter 5:6-7*

*Daniel 3:15-17: "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*

*Matthew 6:25: "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"*

*Matthew 6:33-34: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

*1 Peter 5:6-7: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

## PHILIPPIANS

---

A seventeenth-century Roman Catholic Frenchman named Francois Fenelon said:

*Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a friend. Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes, that He may help you to conquer them; show Him the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them; lay bare your indifference to good, your depraved tastes for evil, your instability. Tell Him how self-love makes you unjust to others, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, how pride disguises you to yourself and others.*

*If you thus pour out all your weaknesses, needs, troubles there will be in lack of what to say. You will never exhaust the subject. it is continually being renewed. People who have no secrets from each other never want for subjects of conversation. They do not weigh their words, for there is nothing to be held back; neither do they seek for something to say. They talk out of the abundance of the heart, without consideration they say just what they think. Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God*

We are encouraged to bring everything to God in prayer, having the assurance that He always hears and answers us. In our prayers, it is important to express gratitude to God for His anticipated answers even as we present our requests to Him. While God does answer the prayers of His children, it is important to acknowledge that His response may not always align with our desires. Sometimes His answer may be a "no" or a "not now," and we may struggle to accept His response. Nonetheless, we can trust that God's answers are always in accordance with His perfect wisdom and love for us. ***Luke 11:9-11; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2-4***

***Luke 11:9-13: "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. 11 "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"***

***Ephesians 6:18: With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,***

***Colossians 4:2-4: Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.***

## PHILIPPIANS

---

Through prayer, God imparts His indescribable peace to us—a peace that surpasses human comprehension and transcends the understanding of the world. This divine peace acts as a guardian, protecting our hearts and minds. When we bring our problems, concerns, and issues to the Lord in prayer, this peace enables us to rejoice in all circumstances and situations. By praying about everything, we free ourselves from worry and redirect our attention and thoughts to the overwhelming and irresistible power of God. When we try to carry our burdens on our own without seeking God in prayer, we miss out on the profound peace that comes from Him. *1 Samuel 1:14-18; Proverbs 3:5-8; John 14:27; Romans 5:1-2; 8:5-8*

*1 Samuel 1:14-18: Then Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you." 15 But Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 "Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation." 17 Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him." 18 She said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

*Proverbs 3:5-8: Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.*

*John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*

*Rom 5:1-2: Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

*Romans 8:5-8: For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Peace with God — sins forgiven

Peace of God — tranquility; assurance of salvation

We enter prayer in worry and can come out in peace, if we truly give over our concerns and issues to the Lord, if we trust in Him for His provisions and His faithfulness. *Psalm 34:6-7; 55:22; Matthew 6:5-8; Hebrews 4:15-16*

*Psalms 34:6-7: This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.*

*Psalms 55:22: Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.*

*Matthew 6:5-8: "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

*Hebrews 4:15-16: For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Paul does not claim that prayer will miraculously stop or calm the storms of life. He acknowledges that our external situations and circumstances may not change, and in fact, they might even continue to deteriorate from our perspective. However, the transformative power of prayer lies in the change it brings within the believer. In prayer, we find the power of God to change our hearts, our perspectives, and our responses to the storms we face. It grants us inner strength, resilience, and a deep sense of peace, even amid difficult circumstances. Though the external world may remain the same, the believer is transformed from within, equipped to face life's challenges with faith and hope. *2 Chronicles 33:10-13; Psalm 55:16-18; 62:8; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; Ephesians 3:14-21*

*2 Chronicles 33:10-13: The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. 11 Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. 12 When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.*

*Psalms 55:16-17: As for me, I shall call upon God, and the LORD will save me. 17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice.*

*Psalms 62:8: Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*

*2 Corinthians 1:8-11: For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, 11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.*

*Ephesians 3:14-21: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

### ***Focus on Christ: Our Sanctuary of Power***

*Philippians 4:8-9: 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. 9 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. NASU*

Paul, in Chapter 2, discussed having the mind of Christ. In Chapter 3, he appealed to believers to seek the knowledge of Christ. In Chapter 4, we have already seen Paul emphasizing the importance of obtaining the peace of Christ through living in unity with fellow believers and prayerful dependence upon God. As he concludes his letter to the Philippians, Paul emphasizes that the power of Christ is realized through pursuing a life of holiness. Finally, he expresses gratitude for the gift provided by the Philippians.

As Paul continuously underscored the grace of God in salvation throughout his epistles, Paul repeatedly stresses the significance of living a life that reflects the transformative power of God's grace. *1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, 5:21-23; Titus 2:11-14; James 1:17, 22-25; 1 Peter 3:8-9*

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-7: For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.*

## PHILIPPIANS

---

*1 Thessalonians 5:21-23: But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Titus 2:11-14: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

*James 1:17: Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

*James 1:22-25: But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

*1 Peter 3:8-9: To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

## PHILIPPIANS

In verse 8, Paul lists virtues that describe the Lord Jesus Christ and should describe believers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

True	Nature of reality	<i>John 1:17</i> , 7:18; <i>Ephesians 5:5-10</i> ; 1 John 3:18
Honorable	Worthy of reverence; venerable	<i>Matthew 5:37</i> ; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 2:11-12
Right/Just	That which is just: what you owe to God, others, and self	John 5:30; <i>Deuteronomy 16:19-20</i>
Pure	Nothing impure that would defile	<i>James 3:17</i> ; 1 John 3:5
Lovely ( <i>gracious</i> )	Only that which inspires love and is amiable of its own	Luke 4:22; 1 Corinthians 13:1; <i>1 Peter 4:8</i>
Good Repute	Only that which edifies hearer and subject alike	Matthew 11:4-6; Acts 10:22; Colossians 4:5-6; <i>1 Timothy 3:7</i>
Excellence (virtue)	Undefilement of any type or source pursuing purity	Ruth 3:11; Proverbs 12:4; <i>2 Peter 1:2-4</i>
Praise	Any and all that is worthy of praise	<i>Romans 13:3-4</i> ; 2 Corinthians 8:16- 21; <i>Revelation 4:11</i>

Focused prayer, the study of the word of God (what has God said), and giving to the Lord (time, attention, and effort) produce these virtues, through His power, the working of the Holy Spirit in our life. *2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 3:14-20; Philippians 3:12-14*

*2 Corinthians 3:18: But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

*Ephesians 3:14-20: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us*

## PHILIPPIANS

---

***Philippians 3:12-14: Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

The world is a dirty, filthy environment and the believer cannot expect not to be soiled by the world. The more time the believers spends taking in the world, the more soiled they become. Believers must retire to the sanctuary of the soul – God’s throne, where Christ is seated, and He will cleanse us by the washing of His Word. It is through the immersing of oneself in the teachings and principles of God's Word that the believer's spiritual state can be purified and renewed. ***1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:26-27; Colossians 3:1-3***

***1 Corinthians 1:30: But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption***

***Ephesians 5:26-27: so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.***

***Colossians 3:1-5: Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.***

***Titus 3:5: He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit***

Practice is a deliberate effort to learn something new and improve; Paul is an example here also. Becoming Christ like is an on-going effort, requiring commitment, dedication, focus, difficulties, failings, and time. ***Romans 6:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9***

***Romans 6:19-20: I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.***

***2 Thessalonians 3:7-9: For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.***