

Philippians 4:4-13

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, 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. ⁹Whatever 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. ¹⁰I 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. ¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I 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. ¹³I can do all this through him who gives me strength.



Discuss

Philippians is named for the people in the city (Philippi) that this letter was sent to. Philippi was a former army colony of Rome, composed mainly of retired soldiers and Roman citizens. Paul, the author of the letter, is in prison (most likely in Rome) and has received gifts and provision from the Philippians via Epaphroditus who almost died on the journey to Paul. He writes this letter to thank the Philippians, encourage them, stop any false teaching and call them to unity in Christ.

- 1) What four sets of practices does Paul encourage the Philippians to engage with in verses 4, 6, 8 and 9? What's the result of these practices?
- 2) What are the range of circumstances Paul says he's encountered in verses 12 to 13? How does he deal with these different situations?

Apply

1) Anxiety can feel like a song stuck on repeat that plays a chorus of worry again and again: worry about a current hardship, about family, about finances, about friends. Paul gives the Philippians a brilliant idea: purposely change the song and your mindset will also change as you call to mind good things (v.8) and rejoice in the Lord (v.4). Share something good you're thankful for. Keep calling it to mind this week.

2) The other practice that's important in hard times is to live like Jesus did – that's who Paul imitated. Paul and the Philippians also know a secret: in God's economy, you don't go into scarcity by being generous – you actually experience joy and deeper trust that God will look out for you. With this in mind, think about someone that you can extend forgiveness, generosity, peace, hope, kindness or encouragement to and do it this week.