

# Philippians

## Lesson 5 Peace and Contentment Philippians 4

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### Peace Between Believers – Philippians 4:1-3

### Day 1

1. What does Paul mean when he says “stand firm in the Lord”?
2. a. What seems to be the problem between Euodia and Syntyche?  
  
b. Why do you think it was important for them to agree?  
  
c. How does Paul urge the Philippians to respond to the disagreement?
3. What is the “Book of Life” and whose names are in it?  
Revelation 20:11-15; 21:22-27

### Learn the TRUTH!



Do people see you as a gentle person? Are you joyful, peaceful, generous and content? The closer you follow God, the more His character will show in you. We can't be like Him by our own effort, but we can do *everything* through Him who gives us strength. In what area do you need help right now? Rely on Him for strength!

### Peace That Passes Understanding – Philippians 4:4-7

### Day 2

4. What are we commanded to do, and what reminder encourages us to do this?
5. a. What should we do instead of worrying or being anxious?  
  
b. What happens when we take our problems to God?
6. What does Jesus teach about worrying? Matthew 6:25-33
7. Can you share about a time you took Paul's advice about prayer and saw God's faithfulness?

**Thoughts Control Attitudes**  
**Philippians 4:8-9**

**Day 3**

8. a. What eight things are we to think about?
- b. Why should we think about these things?
9. a. How can your life be different if you "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"?  
2 Corinthians 10:5
- b. Give examples of how your thoughts have impacted your life.
10. a. What is the key action phrase in verse 9?
- b. Why is this action so important? James 1:22-25

**The Key to Contentment**  
**Philippians 4:10-13**

**Day 4**

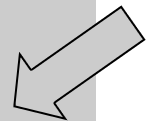
11. a. What had Paul learned about life?
- b. What extremes had Paul experienced?
12. a. What is the secret to being content in every situation?
- b. Are you content or discontent with life?  
What do you need to do to experience contentment? 1 Timothy 6:6-10

**Gratitude Expressed**  
**Philippians 4:14-23**

**Day 5**

13. How had the Philippians helped Paul?
14. a. What did Paul declare to them in verse 19?
- b. What does this say about God?
15. Why do you think most people do not rely on God's promise to meet all of their needs?
16. How have you seen God meet the needs you have had?
17. How has this lesson specifically challenged you?

Live the  
**TRUTH!**



**God cares very much about us. Do you really trust Him or do you think He's holding out on you? Contentment is a choice. If you can't be content with what you have now, you won't be content with more. Develop a grateful heart and you'll find peace and contentment in every situation.**

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# Commentary Philippians Lesson 5

**Check  
It Out:**

Maturity in the Christian life is not instantaneous. Paul is in process, as are the Philippians. He is their teacher, mentor, and spiritual father, yet he calls them his brothers and begs them to live in unity. As God's children, they must not exhibit sibling rivalry. Instead they are to focus their thoughts on heavenly things because they know where they are going. He longs to see them, calling them his "joy and crown" (4:1). Paul's word for crown is *stephanos*, a wreath worn by a winning athlete or an honored guest. The Philippian believers are his reward, the only decoration he wants for his life. He has invested time in others and will be "decorated" for their faith if they will "stand firm."

Conflict between Euodia and Syntyche was causing strife in the church, and Paul urges them to reconcile quickly. Such dissension is a sin — an attack on a believer is an attack on Christ Himself (Acts 9:1-4), and a scandal — it negates the believer's witness to the world. Paul has much to say about keeping peace. In all his letters, he advises his readers to love and accept each other. In the church, Christians are linked together like the parts of a human body. To keep the church functioning in peace, Paul advises mature Christians to sacrifice their own freedom for the sake of "baby" Christians (Romans 14). Don't forget that though Euodia and Syntyche are remembered negatively, they and many other women were fully accepted as fellow workers in the church. Paul writes of Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15), many leading women in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), many Greek women in Berea (Acts 17:12), the deaconess Phoebe in Rome (Romans 16:1), and Euodia and Syntyche in Philippi (4:2-3).

Paul's refrain, "Rejoice!" (4:4), is followed by "Let your gentleness be evident to all" (4:5). "Gentleness" (Greek *epieikes*) implies a fair and reasonable attitude, going beyond justice to show mercy to the guilty — a prominent attribute of our just and merciful God. "Be evident" (Greek *ginosko*) refers to experiential or personal knowledge. The world appreciates Christianity only when it can see and experience the qualities of Christ in the lives of His followers (see Matthew 5:13-14).

The Philippians are not to worry. "The Lord is near," says Paul (4:5). Christ's Second Coming has been the hope of the church for centuries (Titus 2:11-13). Paul may also be saying that God is close, not distant. He urges them to pray, and gives them the right procedure for prayer: First, "Do not be anxious about anything" (4:5). The Greek word *merimna* (anxious) literally means "dividing of the mind." Second, "Present your requests to God." Tell God your needs, and He will give you peace in the midst of your circumstances.

Though God gives peace, believers play a part in developing healthy thought patterns. In verse 8, Paul says we think about those things that are:

- True — the Lord is the truth Himself (John 14:6)
- Noble — serious and reputable
- Right — fair and equitable
- Pure — sanctified or innocent
- Lovely — friendly and commendable
- Admirable — well spoken of and of good report
- Excellent — virtuous and above reproach
- Praiseworthy — commended by God

Think about how Christians are called to be light and salt. Without electricity, the ancient world relied on small oil lamps to provide light and they relied on salt to preserve food. As light in the world, we can show the way to Christ by our words and our actions. As salt, we can help preserve morality and reflect the qualities of Christ. Does your light shine? Are you salt in this world?

Think about how we live in an age of anxiety. Depression is a disease that afflicts millions, including many teenagers. There is a sense of helplessness and hopelessness in the world. We feel as if our world is out of control. The problems are many; the answers are few. On the other hand there are people strive for money and get it, yet they fail to gain the happiness they thought it would bring. They buy it all — cars, computers, houses, art. They try it all — cosmetic surgery, drugs, sex, extreme exercise, being "popular," meditation — and still have no sense of purpose, peace, or joy. They are materially rich, yet they are poor. Many live in spiritual poverty, with no awareness of what is at the root of their problem. As you study, study this lesson seek to discover what God has to say about how you should live?

Since Paul's life demonstrated these qualities, he could say, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice" (4:9). Can we say the same?

Having dared to tell the Philippians to follow his example in thought, Paul demonstrates the positive results. He says, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (4:11). He has just told believers to rejoice in the Lord in all situations; now he shares his own ability to do that. He confesses he had to learn to be content, which implies that it was not easy. He has learned the formula for coping in life's hard places, and he shares that secret in his closing words. He testifies to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ by writing, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (4:13). The encouraging words in this chapter have encouraged countless Christians in dark times. Such phrases as "Rejoice in the Lord always ... do not be anxious about anything ... the God of peace will be with you ... I can do everything through him" are words to live by — to cling to like a lifeboat in a stormy sea.

Next Paul thanks believers for sharing in his troubles by sending him aid, commending them for past times when they contributed to his support, and thus to the support of the gospel. All the help they gave him would be "credited to [their] account" (4:17). He assures them that God will supply all their needs out of His riches. He closes his letter, writing, "To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (4:20). Paul's letters are those of a poet and theologian. Excited by God's goodness, his theological writings are full of lyrical words of praise to God. Philippians, which begins and ends as a personal letter to Paul's partners in the gospel, is no exception. It ends with a promise to the Philippians and a doxology to God.

Truly, God was faithful and gracious to Paul as he effectively engaged in the work of building God's kingdom, even while in chains. Because he had so experienced God's grace, Paul could with integrity bless believers and call the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ into their lives and spirits.



**The apostle Paul declared, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances ... I have learned the secret" (4:11-12). He was under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard, awaiting a possible death sentence when he wrote, "I rejoice in the Lord" and told others to "rejoice in the Lord always." What was his secret? He tells us. The goal of his life was to know Christ more and more (3:10-11). Whatever happened to him, he knew it would bring him closer to the One he longed to be near. When your deepest desire is in tune with God's purpose, when you take your cares to our caring God and leave them there, your ability to cope with life will change, your satisfaction will rise, your relationships will improve. All who live in spiritual poverty need to take a course in living from a man who lived life to the fullest and had deep joy despite his circumstances as he sought deeper fellowship with his Lord. We have just taken such a course — Philippians! What did you learn?**



Depending on your area of need, do a word study on "fear," "prayer," "praise" or "thankfulness." Choose some verses to apply to your life.

Find a partner and hold each other accountable for applying these verses in your life so that you can be grateful, content and have peace rather than fear!