

LESSON 13

Philippians 4:1-9



I've Got Peace Like a River

OPEN IT

1. What is something that steals peace away from your life?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Philippians 4:1-9

2. Why was Paul asking the Philippians to help Euodia and Syntyche?
3. When we replace anxiety with prayer, what does God promise to give us?
4. What are we instructed to think about?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG? — PEACE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Read Philippians 4:1-3

There is an old Christian song called "I've Got Peace Like a River," which means that peace should keep flowing out of and through our lives like a river that never stops flowing! That's not always the case. Things in our lives can steal peace from us. One of the great thieves of our peace is broken relationships. Growing up, my brother and I would "fight" over the dumbest things. I remember that we would sit in the back seat of our parents' car and there would be a line in the seat that we agreed upon that we would not be allowed to cross. We would try to annoy the other person by placing just the tip of our finger over the line and then an all-out war would start between us.

In Philippi, two women, Euodia and Syntyche, weren't getting along. It was a big enough deal that Paul included their dispute in his letter to the Philippians, pleading with them to get along and encouraging the other saints at Philippi to help them work through their differences! Both of these women were believers in Jesus who labored side by side with Paul in the advancement of the gospel!

Is there someone in your life that you aren't getting along with right now? Maybe it's a parent, a brother, sister, friend, or someone else. Romans 12:18 (ESV) states, "*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*" That means if you have wronged someone in action or word, you need to ask for forgiveness from that person. If you have been wronged by someone else, it's your responsibility to let that person know that you are offended and be ready to forgive that person (Matthew 18:15).

5. When you were a child, who was the one person that you experienced the most conflict with? Were you ever able to resolve the conflict with that person? If so, how? If not, why not?

6. What is your responsibility if you see two people in your life not getting along?

7. Is there someone in your life that you are having conflict with right now? If so, what steps does God want you to take to restore that relationship?

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: DEALING WITH ANXIETY — PEACE OF MIND

Read Philippians 4:4-7

One of the biggest issues that counselors in middle schools and high schools encounter in their students' lives is anxiety. Maybe you are dealing with anxiety in your own life. There are many reasons we can feel anxious, from having an unstable home life, to feeling not accepted and all alone at school, to having uncertainty about the future. If anyone had reason to feel anxious, it was Paul. As Paul is writing Philippians, he is in prison, but he doesn't focus on his circumstances. Instead he focuses on Christ! In Philippians 4:5, he says the Lord is near! The reality is that if you're a believer in Jesus, Jesus dwells in you and is always there. Paul was aware of this reality!

Paul then tells the Philippians what to replace anxiety with: prayer and thanksgiving! When we prayerfully lay our burdens at Jesus' feet and recount all the ways we can be thankful, beginning with our salvation that we have in Jesus, then we receive an incredible blessing from God – the peace of God! Your circumstances may not change, but God blesses you with His peace that surpasses all understanding.

8. What causes you to have anxiety?

9. Make a list of all the things that you are thankful for?

10. What are the current burdens on your heart right now? Take some time to pray and take those requests to God!

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: PURSUING PEACE THROUGH RIGHT THINKING

Read Philippians 4:8-9

Every time I walk down the hallway near the library on the second floor at Kaneland Harter Middle School, I see a poster with Ralph Waldo Emerson's words on it: "Sow a Thought, Reap an Action. Sow an Action, Reap a Habit. Sow a Habit, Reap a Character. Sow a Character, Reap a Destiny."

Scripture is clear that transformation begins with our thoughts. Romans 12:2a (ESV) says, "*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,...*" So how is our mind transformed? How can we think about the things in Philippians 4:8? It all starts with saturating your mind with Scripture. Take time to meditate on and memorize Scripture. Place verses around your house so that you can see them frequently. Some people write out Philippians 4:8 and place it in front of their TV so as to be careful of what they are allowing themselves and their families to look at and think about, especially when it comes to entertainment! By the way, Philippians 4:8 is a great verse to memorize!

Right thinking in verse 8 is followed by right behavior in verse 9. Paul tells the Philippians that what they have learned or seen in Paul, practice those same things. When we have right thinking and right behavior, the promise is not just that we experience the "peace of God," but we get to experience the "God of peace" in our everyday lives

11. What things does the average teenager tend to think about regularly?

12. What are some practical steps you can take to saturate your mind with God's Word?