

PHILIPPINIANS

DAY 4

Philippians 4

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TODAY'S THEME: WE MAY NOT CHOOSE OUR THOUGHTS, BUT WE DO CHOOSE WHAT WE MEDITATE ON

Philippians 4:6-9 (ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

I used to struggle with separation anxiety. BIG TIME. I couldn't do a sleepover at a friend's house, and any time my parents went on a vacation, I was a wreck. I'd worry about it for weeks beforehand. I would imagine these worst-case scenarios where my parents would get in an accident on the way to the airport, or where their plane would crash. I know, irrational. I have no idea why it happened, and I have no idea how it stopped. I thought I'd be living at home forever. That would have been awkward. It wasn't even as if it was a fleeting thought. It's as if I repeated these thoughts back to myself. It was constant. And honestly, I think at some point it became a choice.

I think we can read this passage of Scripture and think that Paul is giving Christians tips for a care-free life. As long as I pray one time, I'll never have to worry again. This isn't the case at all, and if you've been a Christian for any length of time at all, you'd likely agree with me. Jesus does too. In John 16 He says to His disciples, "In this world you will have trouble." Paul wasn't by any means guaranteeing a life without concern. The church at Philippi had its share of concerns, as mentioned in previous days. Paul was helping them know what to do WHEN things got hard.

There was a survey done that concluded that 85% of the things we worry about don't happen, and of the 15% that do happen, 79% of people surveyed, discovered that they dealt with those things better than they expected. Worry is a conversation that we haven't had with God. We go through things in our lives, and soon enough like me, we're creating these worst-case scenarios about things that are going to happen, or not happen as a result of what we are currently going through, before anything has happened at all. The imagery Paul is using, is that prayer has the potential to build a wall around our heart and mind, to protect us. "Well how often do I need to pray about then?" Paul would probably say as often as you need to. We worry because things are out of our control. Paul's encouragement is to take an inventory (think about) of things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy (NIV). Perhaps worry will never be completely eliminated from our lives, but I think reflection and a gratitude has a powerful way of producing faith. If He did it before, He can do it again.

What is God speaking to me about in today's reading?

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY:

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