

**PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION V**  
**THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD**  
**HIMSELF, [Philippians 4:1-9](#)**

**A. The Steps to Peace (Part I): Standing Fast, Unity, Rejoicing, and Gentleness, [Philippians 4:1-5](#)**

**[\(Philippians 4:1-9\)](#) DIVISION OVERVIEW: Peace:** the point of this whole passage (**[Phil. 4:1-9](#)**) is the peace of God (**[Phil 4:7](#)**) and the presence of the God of peace (**[Phil 4:9b](#)**). There are six steps that a believer must take to maintain the peace of God within his heart and life. If the believer fails to take these steps, he grieves the Lord and fellow believers, those who have made a special contribution to his growth, those who look upon him as their "joy and crown" (**[Phil. 4:1](#)**).

**Unfortunately, when a believer loses his peace with God, several things happen.....**

1. He becomes self-conscious, and sheepishly shy and guilty, and perhaps discouraged and defeated.
2. He becomes cantankerous, critical, murmuring, grumbling, and divisive.
3. He begins to slip back into sin.

The peace he once had with God and man becomes disturbed, and restlessness grips his soul. His restlessness stirs him into being a troublemaker or into sin or else it plummets him into despair and defeat. He has failed; therefore, he feels unworthy and unable to walk victoriously with God. This is the importance of this passage: the secret of peace—the peace of God Himself.

**[\(4:1-5\)](#) Introduction:** this passage is speaking to Christian believers, not to unbelievers. Unbelievers do not have peace with God. They reject, question, deny, curse, and oppose God. God feels no peace between Himself and an unbeliever. No matter how mild the unbeliever's questioning and rejection is, it is still questioning and rejection and not peace. But when an unbeliever surrenders his life and accepts God, peace is made between him and God. Peace rules both within and between the person and God. In fact, God causes a flood of peace to surge through the heart and life of the new believer.

The question is this: once we have the peace of God flooding our lives, how do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the peace of God ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we stay aware that God's very own presence is within us—stay aware that the God of peace lives within our very being? This is the discussion of this passage: the steps to peace.

1. **Step 1: peace comes through standing fast (v.1).**
2. **Step 2: peace comes through agreement and unity (v.2-3).**
3. **Step 3: peace comes through rejoicing continually and repeatedly (v.4).**
4. **Step 4: peace comes through a strong gentleness (v.5).**

## **1. (Philippians 4:1) Standing Fast— Peace: the first step to peace is standing fast.**

This verse is a transitional verse between what has been said and what is about to be said. **Paul has just said.....**

1. there are enemies of the cross of Christ,
2. the believer's citizenship is in heaven,
3. the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world into heaven, transforming our bodies;

.....**therefore, stand fast in the Lord.**

However, note how the verse fits in with what is to follow. **Phil. 4:9** is the conclusion of this section:

**"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).**

If a person wants the *God of peace*, he must do the things which Paul taught and did, and one of the major things he taught was to stand fast in the Lord. If a person wishes the God of peace, he must stand fast in the Lord.

The word "**stand fast**" (*stēkete*) means simply to stand firm, persist, persevere. It is the picture of a soldier standing fast against the onslaught of an enemy. He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack. He does not flinch; he is not unstable and he is **never defeated**.

**The Christian believer is to stand fast.....**

1. no matter how great the trial
2. no matter the pressure of the temptation
3. no matter the influence, offer, and allurements made by others.

But how does a believer stand fast? When the temptation to surrender is so appealing and the trial is so terrible, where can the believer find the strength to stand fast? There are two places.

**1. There is the believer's source of strength: the Lord Himself.** Note the words, "**Stand fast in the Lord.**" There is only one place the believer can stand fast, and that is "**in the Lord.**"

**The believer must be living and moving and having his being in the Lord; that is, he must be.....**

1. praying, talking, and sharing with the Lord all day long.
2. keeping his thoughts upon the Lord: the glorious salvation, hope, and mission He has given believers.
3. serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

When a believer is walking *in the Lord* throughout the day, his mind and thoughts are upon the Lord. Therefore, when the temptations and trials come, he is *conscious and aware of the Lord's presence and strength*. He has been thinking and sharing and talking with the Lord—standing and walking in the Lord—all day long; therefore, he is much more able to stand fast against the temptation and trial.

This is exactly what is meant by being "**in the Lord.**"

1. **Believers are to be walking in prayer and praise all day long.** This is what keeps the peace of God dwelling in their lives—the "peace of God" that conquers all trials and temptations.

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:6](#)).**

2. **Believers are to be walking with their minds upon the Lord and the things that are pure and honorable.** This is what gives them a sense that the "God of peace" walks with them—the God of peace who gives the believer the power to conquer all trials and temptations.

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" ([Phil. 4:8-9](#)).**

3. **Believers are to actually work at bringing every single thought into subjection to Christ.**

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The believer who walks praying and keeping his mind and thoughts upon the Lord is the believer who stands fast in the Lord. Common sense tells us this. There is no way to be "in the Lord" unless we are thinking, talking, and walking in the Lord. Very simply we are *in* whatever we are thinking, talking, and walking in. The first step to peace is to "stand fast in the Lord."

**2. There is the encouragement: a minister or brother who loves and cares about his fellow-believer's standing fast.** Note how Paul, the minister, feels about his flock—how deeply he feels for those under his care:

- a. my dearly beloved brothers.
  - b. whom I long to see.
  - c. my joy and crown.
- a. He calls them my "**dearly beloved brothers**": they were his brothers and sisters in Christ. They had all trusted Christ as their Savior and become sons and daughters of the family of God. They were all brothers and sisters of the Lord and Paul is reminding them of this relationship. Therefore, they should all stand fast in the Lord.
- b. He says that he longs to see them. He is in prison and unable to be with them, but his heart is with his dear family, the family of God. Therefore, they need to please his heart by standing fast.
- c. He says they are his "joy and crown." This is probably a reference to the rewards to be given in the glorious day of redemption. The word "**crown**" (*stephanos*) refers to the crown or wreath that was given and sat upon the head of a victorious athlete after he had won the victor's crown in his particular event. Paul says that his joy and crown will be the lives of the Philippians themselves when they all appear before Christ. Therefore, if he was to receive the joy and crown of their presence, they must stand fast in the Lord.

The thing to see is this: the need of believers for personal encouragement. If believers are to stand fast, they must be loved and cared for by the minister and other believers. Nothing encourages us any more than knowing that we are loved and cared for by others. The love of others stirs us to live like we should and to stand fast against temptation and trial.

**Thought 1.** Scripture exhorts believers to stand fast in several things.

**1) Believers are to stand fast in the faith.**

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" ([1 Cor. 16:13](#)).

2) Believers are to stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" ([Galatians 5:1](#)).

3) Believers are to stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

4) Believers are to stand fast in the Lord which is the secret of peace.

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" ([Phil. 4:1](#)).

5) Believers are to stand fast and hold the teachings or doctrines that have been taught.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" ([2 Thes. 2:15](#)).

## 2. [\(Philippians 4:2-3\) Unity— Brotherhood— Restoration: the second step to peace is agreement and unity.](#)

There is no peace if people are.....

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. arguing    | f. brawling    |
| b. bickering  | g. wrangling   |
| c. biting     | h. disputing   |
| d. dissenting | i. criticizing |
| e. grumbling  |                |

Paul knew this, a fact that is easily seen by all, but too often ignored by some. Paul knew something else as well, something that the Lord Himself knew. There were some in the Philippian church who were being critical, arguing, grumbling, and quarreling. The Lord had already had Paul to charge the believers:

1. To stand fast in one spirit and in defending the gospel.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

2. To love each other and to be of one accord and mind.

**"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:1-2).**

3. To esteem others better than self.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).**

**1. The plea is for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord.** The source of the disturbance in the church was due to two prominent ladies in the church: Euodia and Syntyche. Who they were and what caused the trouble between them is not known. Only one thing is known about them: they were quarrelers—two women who differed and who bickered and argued, criticized and dissented, murmured and grumbled.

**Note what Paul did:** he pleaded for the two ladies to get their minds together **"in the Lord."** As stated in the former point, if a person is living and moving and having his being **"in the Lord,"** then he is walking and serving the Lord. He is consumed with the Lord and His mission. There is no time for arguing and divisiveness. In fact, the very opposite is true. He has time only for joining hands with others who are living and moving in the Lord—all seeking to fulfill the Lord's mission upon earth. A person walking in the Lord is consumed with keeping the presence of the Lord alive in his heart and life. His thoughts are upon the Lord and His mission, not upon differences with other believers and arguing and divisiveness.

2. The need is for a true friend, a yokefellow, to step in and help any who are quarreling. The word **"yokefellow"** (*suzuge*) is thought by some to be a proper name given to some Christians when they were baptized. It was a common practice for believers to be given new names at their baptism in order to symbolize their spiritual birth. Just who this yokefellow was is not known, but he must have been a man deeply respected by the people of the church. His name refers to the *yoke* or *collar* that was fitted around the neck of oxen for plowing. The collar attached the plow and held the two oxen together so that they would pull together and more quickly get the work done.

Therefore, **"yokefellow"** means a person who pulls and works cooperatively with others. The very fact that Paul would ask him to help the two quarreling ladies shows that he was highly esteemed. Paul felt that he cared and that the two quarrelers would listen to him—that he could solve the dispute and bring about reconciliation.

**Thought 1.** Most churches have one or more yokefellows, **persons.....**

1. who love and care deeply for others.
2. who are always helping and ministering to others.
3. whom God has gifted and appointed to be ministerial helpers to the flock.
4. who are highly respected and esteemed by most in the congregation.

The yokefellow is the person who should step in when quarrels and divisiveness begin to arouse their poisonous heads. The yokefellow is the person especially gifted by God to bring reconciliation and peace to the church.

**Note:** a message is given to the yokefellow as well as to the two quarrelers. The yokefellow is to help; helping is not an option. God has called and gifted him with a loving and caring nature that was especially suited for this kind of ministry. Therefore, he was to use his gift by stepping forward and doing his best to bring reconciliation and peace.

**Note also: there are two other reasons why he must help.**

- a. The quarrelers were co-laborers in the gospel. They had helped Paul and Clement and others in the church. They needed to be serving in the gospel, not arguing and differing. Therefore, every effort possible had to be exerted in trying to salvage them.
- b. Second, their names were in the Book of Life. They were true believers who had slipped back into a life of sinful divisiveness. Despite their sin, they were true believers; therefore, every effort needed to be made to restore them.

**"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men"**  
**([Ephes. 6:7](#)).**

**"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all"** ([Mark 10:43-44](#)).

**"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise"** ([Luke 10:36-37](#)).

**"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet"** ([John 13:14](#)).

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep"** ([John 21:16](#)).

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves"** ([Romans 15:1](#)).

**"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest**

thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:1-2](#)).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" ([1 Thes. 5:14](#)).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God" ([Jeremiah 3:22](#)).

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" ([Hosea 14:4](#)).

"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" ([Micah 7:19](#)).

### **[3. \(Philippians 4:4\) Rejoicing: the third step to peace is that of rejoicing in the Lord.](#)**

**Note** that a person is to rejoice always, that is, continually; and then he is to rejoice again, that is, repeatedly.

Remember: Paul is in prison and the church is having a problem with some false teaching. Yet, Paul tells the believers that they are to walk about rejoicing in the Lord. In fact they are to rejoice in the Lord always—no matter the circumstances.

### **[4. \(Philippians 4:5\) Moderation— Gentleness: the fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness.](#)**

The word "**moderation**" (*epieikēs*) is a difficult word to translate into English. It is translated by others as gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness. There is a tendency to say that either forbearance or gentleness is the better translation. Barclay says that the word has the idea of justice in it, but that the meaning goes beyond and claims that there is *something better than justice*—a gracious gentleness.

**1. Believers are to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers.** Note the phrase, "**all men.**" The exhortation not only deals with believers within the church, but with unbelievers. Barclay makes an excellent exposition of this point:

*"The Christian, as Paul sees it, is the man who knows that for him there is something beyond justice. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before*

*Him, Jesus could have applied the letter of the Law, and she should, according to it, have been stoned; but He went beyond justice. As far as justice goes, there is not one of us who deserves anything but the condemnation of God, but God goes far beyond justice. Paul lays it down that the mark of a Christian in his personal relationships with his fellow-men must be that he knows when, and when not, to insist on justice, and that he always remembers that there is something which is beyond justice, and which makes a man like God" (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.94.)*

**Thought 1.** The point is well-taken: we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. The last thing we must do is criticize, condemn, censor, neglect, and ignore unbelievers. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat them with a *loving gentleness*. We must be gentle, having absolutely nothing to do with harshness. Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn. Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost. The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel in a spirit of *love* and *gentleness*.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" ([Ephes. 4:2](#)).

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" ([Col. 3:13](#)).

"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" ([1 Thes. 2:7](#)).

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" ([Titus 3:2](#)).

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" ([James 3:17](#)).

**2. The reason we must be gentle to men is because the Lord is at hand.** He is ready to come, and His coming is near. This simply means that when He comes, everyone of us will need Him to treat us with gentleness. We are sinners—men and women, boys and girls—who sin too often. The Lord will have every right to be critical and condemning of us. Our only hope is that He will be gentle with us. Therefore, we must be gentle with all other men. Only if we are forgiving toward them will the Lord be forgiving toward us.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Ephes. 4:32](#)).

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" ([Matthew 6:12](#)).

**"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)).**

**"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" ([Mark 11:25](#)).**

**"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" ([Luke 6:38](#)).**

**"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" ([Luke 17:4](#)).**

**PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION V**  
**THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD**  
**HIMSELF, [Philippians 4:1-9](#)**

**B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer and Positive Thinking,**  
**[Philippians 4:6-9](#)**

**([Philippians 4:6-9](#)) Introduction:** remember we are answering a question—once we possess the peace of God, how do we maintain the peace? (See note—[Phil. 4:1-5](#) for more discussion.) Once we have made *peace with God*, then the peace of God floods our lives. How do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the *peace of God* ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we keep a consciousness of God's very own presence within us—an awareness that the "**God of peace**" lives within our very being? This passage discusses two of the most important steps to possessing peace. Above all other passages, it tells us how to have peace and how to maintain peace. If we will take these two steps, the peace of God will rule and reign in our hearts and lives. We will never lose our peace or be without peace.

1. **Peace comes through prayer (v.6-7).**
2. **Peace comes through positive thinking (v.8-9).**

**1. ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)) Peace—Prayer—Anxiety: peace comes through prayer.**

**Note three significant points.**

1. There is the charge: be anxious (*merimnate*) about nothing. The idea is that the believer is not to worry or fret about a single thing. The word "**nothing**" (*mēden*) means not even one thing. Humanly speaking, the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious.

- a. They were suffering severe persecution ([Phil. 1:18-19](#)).
- b. They were facing a disturbance in the church, some disunity and quarreling ([Phil. 1:27, 42](#)).
- c. They had some carnal members within their fellowship, some members who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered ([Phil. 2:3-4](#); [Phil. 3:12](#)).
- d. They were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and the teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ ([Phil. 3:2-3, 18-19](#)).
- e. Some of the believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

There was little else that could confront these dear believers. They were facing about every trial and temptation imaginable, the kind of trouble that arouses anxiety and worry.

**Humanly, a person is going to fret, worry and suffer anxiety.....**

- a. when he is either about to lose or lacks food, clothing, or shelter.
- b. when he is persecuted, ridiculed, abused, or threatened.
- c. when he is surrounded by quarrels, disturbance, carnality, or false teaching.

In the midst of such circumstances, the only way a person can keep from worrying is to receive an injection of supernatural power.

This is the very point of Scripture. There is an answer to worry and anxiety, a supernatural answer: the peace of God. God will *enable* the believer to conquer worry and anxiety. God will overcome the trials of life for the believer, no matter how terrible and pressuring they may be. God will infuse the believer with peace—with the very peace of God Himself—a peace so great and so wonderful that it carries the believer right through the trial. Of course, this does not mean the believer is not to be concerned about the problems of life. He is, but there is a difference between concern and anxiety or worry. Concern drives us to arise and tackle the problems of life with an indomitable courage and diligence. Concern drives us to tackle and conquer all that we can handle.

**Anxiety and worry cause all kinds of problems.....**

1. fear to act
2. withdrawal
3. hesitation
4. cowardice
5. depression
6. discouragement
7. a defeatist attitude
8. distrust and unbelief
9. quick, unplanned action
10. unwise and harmful decisions
11. physical sickness and infirmities
12. emotional problems
13. spiritual backsliding

Of course the list could go on and on, but the point to see is the seriousness of anxiety and worry. Just take a moment and think about a few of the above problems: how anxiety and worry cause a person to act and suffer. The seriousness is easily seen. We all know people who suffer greatly because of anxiety and worry; they simply lack the peace of God. Yet, the charge of Scripture is forceful: be anxious for nothing, not even for a single thing.

**"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles [unbelievers] seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first**

the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:31-33](#)).

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" ([Luke 10:41](#)).

"And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind" ([Luke 12:29](#)).

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" ([Luke 21:34](#)).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)).

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).

2. The remedy for anxiety and worry: prayer. The four words used for prayer show exactly how prayer is the answer to anxiety and worry.

- a. The word "**prayer**" (*proseuchē*) refers to the special times of prayer that we share in periods of devotion and worship. We are to have set times for prayer, times that we especially set aside for devotion and worship.
- b. The word "**supplication**" (*deēsis*) refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs. We feel a deep, intense need, therefore, we go before God and *supplicate*, that is, pour out our soul to God. Need—great need—confronts us, and the only possible help and deliverance is God. Therefore, we come and lay our need before Him as a child: crying, pleading and begging for His help, comfort, deliverance, and peace.
- c. The word "**thanksgiving**" (*eucharistia*) means that we thank and praise God for all that He is and for all that He has done for us.
- d. The word "**requests**" (*aitēmata*) means specific and definite requests. Our praying is not to be general, but specific. We are to lay before God exactly what is needed and we are not to fear that we are being too detailed with God or bothering God. Neither are we to hold back from asking because we fear He will not answer something so specific. Too often believers fear not receiving the answer to a specific request, fear that it will show how weak they are spiritually if the request is not granted.

Note what Scripture says: "**In everything**" pray like this—use all four ways of praying and use them in praying for everything.

**This means two things.**

- a. We are to walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him—and we do this *by prayer*. We live and move in God through prayer. We pray "**in everything**"—all day long as we walk and move about our daily affairs.
1. We *pray* in times that are specifically set aside for devotion and worship.
  2. We *supplicate*—struggle in prayer—when facing times of deep and intense need.
  3. We offer *thanksgiving* (and praise) all day long as we walk and move about.
  4. We offer our *requests*—specific requests—to God. We ask Him to do definite things as we walk throughout the day.

As stated, we walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him; and the way we do this is through prayer.

- b. We are to pray about every thing no matter how small and insignificant it may seem. God is interested in the details of our lives, in the most minute details. He wants us acknowledging Him in *all our ways* or steps because He wants to care and look after every single step.

Now picture the scene: we are walking throughout the day, sharing with God every step of the way, and God is taking care of every step of the way. What then can take the peace of God away from us? Absolutely nothing! For as we walk in prayer and fellowship with God, God is infusing us with His presence and peace. No matter the conflict or trial, we are continuing to share with God and God is continuing to infuse us with His peace. Through prayer He is giving us the peace to conquer and walk through the trial. Our relationship with God and His peace is unbroken.

**"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" ([Matthew 7:7](#)).**

**"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" ([Matthew 26:41](#)).**

**"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" ([Luke 18:1](#)).**

**"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" ([Luke 21:36](#)).**

**"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" ([Ephes. 6:18](#)).**

**"Pray without ceasing" ([1 Thes. 5:17](#)).**

3. The promise: peace. Peace (*eirēnē*) means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God.

**It means to have a sense, a consciousness, a knowledge that God will.....**

1. provide
2. guide
3. strengthen
4. sustain
5. save
6. deliver
7. encourage
8. give real life both now and forever

A person can experience the peace of God only as he walks and moves about in prayer. Why? Because only God can *deliver man* through the most severe circumstances and tragedies of life; only God can *infuse assurance and security* within the human soul.

**The wonderful promise about the peace of God is twofold.**

a. **First**, the peace of God passes all understanding. It is beyond anything we can ask or think. It surpasses all our imaginations. Think of the most terrible situation you can imagine; then think of the peace you would want as you went through that trial. In actual experience, the peace of God is far greater than anything you could ever imagine or understand. The peace of God actually carries the faithful believer through the very midst of trial and tribulation.

b. **Second**, the peace of God keeps our hearts and minds. The word "shall keep" (*phrouresei*) is a military word meaning to garrison, to keep guard and protect. The peace of God is like a most elite soldier who guards and protects the most precious possession of God: the believer's heart and mind.

However, note that God can keep us only as we are "**in Christ Jesus.**" We can know the peace of God only if we have trusted Christ as our Lord and Savior and only if we walk in fellowship with Him. To be in Christ means to walk in Christ—to live, move and have our being in Him.

**"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ([John 14:27](#)).**

**"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).**

**"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).**

**"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" ([Romans 14:17](#)).**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)).

"The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace" ([Psalm 29:11](#)).

## **2. (Philippians 4:8-9) Mind— Thoughts— Thinking Positive: peace comes through positive thinking.**

The word "**think**" (*logizesthe*) means to consider, reflect, reason, and ponder. The idea is that of focusing our thoughts until they shape our behavior.

### **The truth is:**

- a. what we think is what we become.
- b. where we have kept our minds is where we are.
- c. our thoughts shape our behavior.
- d. what we do is what we think.

William Barclay says, "...it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough and long enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.97).

A person who centers his thoughts upon the world and its things will live for the world and its things: money, wealth, lands, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits.

### **Very simply stated, a person who centers his thoughts.....**

- a. upon the flesh and its lusts will live to satisfy the flesh through such things as pride, self, greed, pleasure, and sex.
- b. upon the eyes and its lusts will live to satisfy the eyes and its lusts through such things as the immoral, pornographic filth flaunted in magazines, films, books, and television; the exposing of the human body; dressing to attract attention; looking a second time.
- c. upon the pride of life will live to satisfy such things as the desire for recognition, honor, position, and authority.

A mind set upon the world and the flesh is what leads to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness. This was the stress of the former point ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)). A worldly mind never knows peace—not true peace, not the peace of God. God will just never allow a worldly mind to have peace, for it is the restlessness of the human soul that He uses to reach men for salvation.

**The point is this:** when a person accepts Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God.

**"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:2](#)).**

**"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:23-24](#)).**

**"And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" ([Col. 3:10](#)).**

Once a person has been converted to Christ and becomes a new man, he is to focus his thoughts upon the good things of life and upon God. He is to give his mind to **positive thinking**. In fact, he is to think only positive thoughts. The believer is never to allow an immoral, fleshly, worldly, selfish, sinful or evil thought to enter his mind. There is never to be a negative thought whatsoever in the mind of the believer. Sinful and negative thoughts disrupt and destroy peace. For this reason, the believer is to struggle to conquer his mind and thoughts. He is to exert every cell of energy possible to captivate and control every thought. What we think is so important that God tells us what we are to think.

1. The charge is to think and practice positive thinking.

a. **"Whatsoever things are true" (*alēthēs*):** real and genuine.

Many things in the world seems to be true, but they are not; they are false and deceptive, an illusion, and a counterfeit. They seem to offer peace, but what they offer is a deceptive, a counterfeit peace—only escapism. We are to keep our minds upon things that are true, and we are to live lives that are true to both men and God. When our thoughts and lives are centered upon true things, peace comes to the human heart.

b. **"Whatsoever things are honest" (*semna*):** honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, and noble. Barclay says: "The word really describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it. There are things in this world which are flippant and cheap, things which are attractive to the light-minded; but it is on the things which are grave and serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.98).

c. **"Whatsoever things are just" (*dikaia*):** right and righteous behavior. It has to do with right behavior toward man and God.

The believer is to keep his thoughts upon his duty toward men and God—upon doing what is right toward both. Man is to be a responsible being while on earth. He is responsible for the earth and his fellow human beings, and he is to be held accountable by God for both. Therefore, he is not to focus his thoughts upon comfort and selfish pleasures and pursuits. He is to focus his thoughts upon the things that are **just and righteous**. He owes his thoughts and mind to the world and to his fellow men and especially to God. He owes whatever

contribution he can make to the world and to God. A mind filled **with just and righteous** thoughts will know peace.

- d. **"Whatsoever things are pure" (*hagna*):** morally clean, spotless, stainless, chaste, undefiled, free from moral pollution, filth, dirt, and impurities.  
The believer's mind and thoughts are to be pure—every thought.
- e. **"Whatsoever things are lovely" (*prophilē*):** pleasing, winsome, kind, gracious; things that excite love and kindness.  
The believer's thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. The believer's thoughts are to be focused upon things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down.
- f. **"Whatsoever things are of good report" (*euphēma*):** reputable, high-toned, worthy things; things of the highest quality.  
The believer is to think only upon worthy things. He is not to fill his mind with junk; he is not to listen to **bad reports**, no matter how juicy they may seem. Neither is he to fill his mind with junk, whether through rumor, radio, television, music, off-colored jokes, or by whatever source. His thoughts are to be focused only upon worthy things—only upon that which is of good report.
- g. **"If there be any virtue [excellence] (*aretē*) and if there be any praise [in any thought] (*epainos*),** think on these things." Positive thinking is the answer to peace for the Christian believer.

2. The source or power for **positive thinking is twofold.**

- a. There is the Word of God. Paul says that he had preached and taught the very virtues of positive thinking to the Philippians and that they had learned them. What Paul had preached and taught was the will of God; therefore, the source or power for positive thinking comes from the Word of God. It is in the Word of God that a person finds the things that are to fill his mind. His thoughts are to be upon the teachings of God's Word.

**"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" ([Col. 3:16](#)).**

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)).**

**"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).**

**"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" ([Psalm 19:8](#)).**

**"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" ([Psalm 119:9](#)).**

**"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" ([Psalm 119:11](#)).**

**"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" ([Psalm 119:105](#)).**

- b. There are noble examples. Paul says that he lived as a testimony before the Philippians. Therefore, they could follow his example because he kept his thoughts and life upon the very virtues of positive thinking.

**"Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" ([Phil. 3:17](#)).**

**"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" ([2 Thes. 3:7](#)).**

**"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 1:13](#)).**

**"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience" ([2 Tim. 3:10](#)).**

3. There is the energy and power of self-effort and discipline. **Note the words**, **"Those things...do."** The believer is expected to control and discipline his mind. He is to struggle against all sinful and negative thoughts, and fight to think only positive thoughts. Note the result of positive thinking: the God of peace shall be with the believer.

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" ([Romans 8:5](#)).**

**"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:2](#)).**

**"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)).**

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).**

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" ([Phil. 4:8](#)).**

**"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:23-24](#)).**

**"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)).**