



FAITHFUL SEASONS WITH GRACE

The Peace That Guards

A guide through Philippians 4:4-9 for the woman whose heart will not settle

*"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 4:7 (ESV)

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Rejoice Always

Not when circumstances improve. Always — because the object of rejoicing is the Lord, not the situation.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."

Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

Paul wrote this from prison. The repetition — again I will say, rejoice — is not accidental. It is the kind of thing you say when you know your reader will resist it, when the circumstances argue against it, when it sounds almost unreasonable given the situation. He says it twice because it needs to be said twice.

The key is the phrase in the Lord. Not rejoice in your circumstances. Not rejoice because things are going well. Rejoice in the Lord — in who He is, in what He has done, in what He has promised. That is an anchor that does not move when everything else does.

REFLECTING ON VERSE 4

What are you finding it hardest to rejoice through right now? Be specific.

What is true about God right now that your circumstances are arguing against? What do you know about who He is that does not change?

What is the difference between rejoicing in the Lord and putting on a happy face? Have you ever experienced genuine joy in a genuinely hard season?

Gentleness, Nearness, and the Practice of Prayer

The posture that makes peace possible, and the practice that opens the door to it.

"Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:5-6 (ESV)

Reasonableness here can also be translated gentleness — a kind of open-handed, unhurried graciousness toward everyone around you. It is only possible when you believe the Lord is at hand. Near. Present. Paying attention to what you are walking through. When we believe God is close, we can hold our circumstances with an open hand rather than a clenched fist.

Then the command: do not be anxious about anything. Not because problems do not exist but because there is somewhere specific to bring them. Prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. The thanksgiving is not pretending things are fine. It is the posture of coming to God while remembering who He already is — which changes what happens inside you even before anything changes outside you.

REFLECTING ON VERSES 5-6

What are you most anxious about right now? Write it specifically — not generally worried, but the actual named thing.

Write a short prayer of supplication with thanksgiving — name the request and one thing you are grateful for even now. Do not clean it up.

What would it look like to hold this situation with an open hand rather than a clenched fist this week?

The Peace That Guards

Peace that surpasses understanding does not explain itself. It simply holds.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:7 (ESV)

The peace of God surpasses understanding — meaning it cannot be fully analyzed, reasoned into existence, or produced by finally figuring everything out. It is not the peace that comes when all the problems are solved. It is the peace that arrives when you have handed things to God even though nothing is solved yet.

The word guard is a military term. It means to stand watch, to protect against entry. This peace does not simply settle in your heart — it stands at the door and keeps out the anxiety that would otherwise flood back in. It guards both your heart (what you feel) and your mind (what you think). Both, in Christ Jesus.

You do not produce this peace. You receive it as the result of the practice described in verse 6. That is the sequence: pray with thanksgiving, and the peace of God will guard. Not might guard. Will guard.

REFLECTING ON VERSE 7

Have you ever experienced peace that did not make sense given your circumstances? What was happening and what did it feel like?

What is the difference between the peace that comes from circumstances improving and the peace Paul is describing here? How do you tell them apart?

What is trying to get past the guard right now — what anxious thought keeps returning? What would it look like to give it to God specifically?

What You Think About Matters

The mind is not a passive thing. Scripture gives us a specific list — not a self-help list, but a God-centered one.

"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."

Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

Paul is not being naive about hard circumstances. He is addressing something we all know from experience — what we dwell on shapes how we feel, and how we feel shapes how we live. The list he gives is not vague positivity. Each word is anchored in who God is and what is real, not what we wish were true.

THINK ON THESE THINGS

- **True** — what Scripture says about God and about you
- **Honorable** — what reflects His character
- **Just** — what God has promised He will make right
- **Pure** — what is free from corrupting mixture
- **Lovely** — what is genuinely good and worth savoring
- **Commendable** — what others would affirm as worthy
- **Excellent / Praiseworthy** — what points to God's goodness
- His past faithfulness in your own life
- What He has already provided and done
- Who He says you are in Christ

INSTEAD OF THESE

- Worst-case scenarios not yet real
- What others may be thinking about you
- What could still go wrong
- What is not yet resolved or answered
- What you cannot control or change today
- Comparing your life to someone else's
- Replaying past failures or wounds
- Imagining future conversations that have not happened
- Dwelling on what you lack rather than what you have
- Running the same anxious loop again

REFLECTING ON VERSE 8

What have you been dwelling on most this week that is not on Paul's list? What specifically would it look like to redirect that thought toward something true?

Practice These Things

Peace is not only received. It is practiced. And the God of peace comes with the practice.

"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:9 (ESV)

Practice these things. Not understand them. Not agree with them in theory. Practice them — imperfectly, repeatedly, coming back again when you drift. The promise at the end is not only the peace of God (verse 7) but the God of peace himself. His presence, not only His gift. And that presence comes through the doing.

Paul models this himself. He has learned contentment. He has practiced prayer. He has trained his mind to think on what is true. This is what a life shaped by Philippians 4 looks like from the inside — not a feeling that comes automatically, but a set of practiced responses to circumstances that becomes more natural over years of repetition.

A PERSONAL INVENTORY — PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

Rejoice always (v.4): What is one specific way you can rejoice in who God is today, regardless of circumstances?

Pray with thanksgiving (v.6): What specific request have you been holding back from God? Write it here and give it to Him.

Think on true things (v.8): What is one true thing about God you need to rehearse today instead of the anxious thought that keeps returning?

Practice these things (v.9): Which of these six practices do you most need to put into action this week? Tell someone.

Grace and peace to you, in whatever season you are in. — Keri