

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

FEBRUARY 18 - 22, 2019

TOU

SERMON SERIES

A Study of Philippians

# MONDAY

## Philippians 4:1-4

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The disagreement between two Christian women was serious enough to be addressed in a public letter to the Philippians. Paul does not take sides. He urges the two who are at odds to be of the same mind in the Lord. He asks those close to the situation to encourage reconciliation and resolution.

Does Paul just want everyone to get along? No. Paul knows these two women are faithful workers for the Gospel. Their dispute needs to be cleared up in order for more purposeful work to be done so that the Gospel message will not be hindered.

The two women have common ground—Jesus Christ. Their names are written in the Book of Life. Paul simply told them to be of the same mind in the Lord.

As we have disagreements with our Christian brothers and sisters (and we will, because we are human, imperfect and sinful), how does that impact our testimony of faith in Jesus? When we look at the situation, can we be honest? Does it come down to our own selfish desires or need for control? Are we acting out of hurt?

If we fall into a situation where we are at odds with another, consider the bigger picture. As Christians, we are on the same team. We want to honor and glorify God. Paul says in verse 4 to “*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*” People who are

joy-filled and rejoicing in the Lord are not apt to give offense or to take offense.

When we are spending time in the presence of the Lord regularly, when we are filled up with the Spirit and have the joy of the Lord, regardless of our circumstances we are far less inclined to quarrel with others.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to maintain unity for the sake of the Gospel. In John 13:34-35 Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

When we are rooted in Christ, we find joy in seeking peace with others.

## QUESTION

Is there any brother or sister in Christ whom you need to reconcile with, forgive, or ask for forgiveness? What will be said about Jesus ... because of YOU?

## PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for Glad Tidings India, which moves people from Most to Least. India has the most people who are illiterate, impoverished, or without access to clean water; and it has the most people who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. To be added to the prayer list, email [byron@gladtidingsindia.org](mailto:byron@gladtidingsindia.org).

# TUESDAY

## Philippians 4:4-6

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“*Let your gentleness be known.*” In this statement, Paul uses an interesting ancient Greek word, *epieikeia*, that is translated “gentleness,” but other Bibles translate it as “patience, softness, forbearance or modesty.” The word describes the heart of a person who will let the Lord fight his battles, a person who is truly free from worry, anxiety and all the things in this life that cause stress.

Living in this state of mindfulness—that the Lord will take up our cause and we can trust Jesus to settle every wrong when He returns—makes it possible to let our gentleness be known to all. When we are rooted in Christ, we find joy in seeking peace with others.

This past Christmas I was stressed over our family plan for celebrating Christmas. Two of our boys are engaged, and merging two families into ours takes some work. We had a plan early on in December. We’d host Christmas Day dinner and all four boys and the girls would be seated around our table ... until my oldest son wanted to change “the plan.” I wanted to dig in and stand strong for what was fair. We had already given up Thanksgiving and taken the day after. I did not have peace and my joy was diminishing by the day.

Finally, during a morning prayer time, I felt the Quiet Whisper speak to my heart and the words “release them” repeated. As I prayed the Armor of God over each family member and fiancé, I came to the

sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The verse from Romans 12:18, *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone,”* came into my head. I knew God wanted me to let go of my plans and trust Him. I called my son and let him know that we’d be happy to see him and his fiancé for brunch or whenever was convenient. I immediately had peace and joy. Christmas turned out to be filled with more abundance of family time and blessings than if I had held on tight.

I was reminded to listen, trust, and follow God’s leading in all things. He knows best and I can release my concerns to Him, giving way for peace and gentleness—two Fruits of the Spirit.

## QUESTION

Is there anything causing your spirit to be unsettled right now? Do you feel anxious? If so, what is holding you back from bringing your cares to the Lord in prayer?

## PRAYER FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for the mission team from the U.S. that is on a trip from February 11-23 to witness firsthand how the Word of God and the love of Christ is changing lives through literacy classes, sewing machines, cycle rickshaws, water wells, children’s Bible school, and training church planters.

# WEDNESDAY

## Philippians 4:6-7

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This passage is a command, not an option, according to Paul. He also wrote that EVERYTHING is to be the subject of prayer and that nothing is off limits to God.

We are to make known our requests to God ... yet He already knows our requests before we pray them. He will often wait for our participation through prayer before honoring our request. We know, then, that it was the power of God in our lives.

My favorite part of this passage is the promise that “*the peace of God*” will guard our hearts and minds! It is such a peace that can’t be explained in logical terms or with human understanding. It is beyond our ability to explain; it must be experienced to grasp.

Have you ever experienced this type of peace that transcends all understanding? I have—significantly twice now. Both were during very difficult circumstances involving cancer. The first time, my husband and I were driving in the pitch dark at 5 a.m. to USC Norris for a major cancer surgery. My husband would be undergoing surgery for hours that day and remain in the hospital for the next six days. We had four little boys at home. We should have been nervous and unsettled. Instead, we were very calm—not one butterfly in our stomachs! We had family and friends praying for us ... more than we could count. And the “peace of God which transcends all

understanding” guarded our hearts and minds that morning. We experienced it like never before and we were grateful to God!

Fast forward to last year when I went through breast cancer, and I was at the hospital about to go in for a major surgery myself. I also should have been scared and nervous. The anesthesiologist came in and asked if I’d like a drug to “take the edge off” before going into the operating room. I declined, saying, “No, I’m good. I have lots of family and friends praying for me and I feel peace.” With a look of shock and bewilderment, he left the room.

Our God is to be trusted. He is in control and can handle the little things, as well as the overwhelming, confusing and difficult circumstances we face. He wants to shoulder our burdens. He promises us peace when we choose to open our grip and release our concerns and needs to Him.

## QUESTION

What are you holding onto right now that you need to release to God in prayer?

## PRAYER FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for our brothers and sisters in India, for new believers, and for seekers of the truth as they face persecution for their faith. India is number 10 on the list of countries that persecute Christians. Elections are in May 2019. Pray for a new government that is more tolerant of Christians.

# THURSDAY

## Philippians 4:6-7

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*“In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”* (v. 6). What a privilege to be able to bring ALL things before the Creator of heaven and earth!

Prayer may seem to you like a discipline or an unnatural activity. In our society we are brought up to be independent and handle things on our own. Often times it isn't until we've tried everything by ourselves, and maybe failed, that we go to God in prayer. But when we live like this, we miss out on the richness of what God has for us. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

Time spent in prayer brings you closer to God. Just like spending time with your spouse or close friend, time with the Lord develops your relationship. You learn to hear that “still small voice,” gain the peace of His presence, and feel the power of prayer.

I have heard that when we work, we work; but when we pray, God works. Skeptics may call answered prayer coincidences, but begin praying and see how many coincidences begin to happen!

In Matthew 6:5-13, Jesus uses a teachable moment with His disciples, showing them how to pray. He explains what prayer is not and then

gives them an example of how to pray in the “Lord’s Prayer.” Jesus expects us to pray regularly, privately, earnestly, and specifically.

We can pray anytime, anywhere. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul says, “*Pray without ceasing.*” However, having a special place to focus and pray is important. Where is your place? On a comfy living room chair, on the patio listening to birds chirping, or in a quiet room? My space is the kitchen table, early in the morning before the house is awake, with a cup of coffee and often a candle lit. It’s my time with Jesus. I read devotions, study the Bible, journal and pray. Not every day... but most. Starting my day being “prayed up” makes an impact on my life, my family, those I pray for, and most of all, my walk with the Lord.

Aren’t you grateful our loving God wants to spend time with us, hear our prayers and accept our thanksgiving?!

## QUESTION

Have you experienced the power of prayer? Do you have a special “prayer place”? If so, how often do you meet Jesus there?

## PRAYER FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for the staff of India Bible Literature and the local churches they support. Pray for vision and discernment, good health and safety as they travel throughout India. Pray for the literacy teachers and church planters being trained in evangelism and discipleship.

# FRIDAY

## Philippians 4:8-9

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Whatever is **True - Noble - Right - Pure - Lovely - Admirable - Excellent - Praiseworthy** — think about these things. When we keep these things at the forefront of our minds, they overflow out of our hearts and minds—flowing forth from us.

We are told by Paul to meditate on these things. Much of the Christian life comes down to what we put in our minds. The first part of Romans 12:2 says, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* In 2 Corinthians 10:5 Paul says, *“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

What we choose to look at, think about, watch, and consider does matter. One lent season a couple of years ago, my small group members were considering what they would give up for lent. I decided to give up watching all news. I had the habit of watching the news while I ate my lunch and often in the evening, mainly for the weather report. But stories of homicides, robberies, crashes, unrest—pure negativity—riddled the news.

When I chose to give this time up, I found myself feeling light, free, positive, less burdened, and more joy-filled. I was able to focus,

reflect and prepare for the celebration of Easter, which is what the lent season is all about—reflection and preparation for our Easter Celebration! Allowing myself that extra time to focus on what I am thankful for, time in the Word of God, and placing in my mind positive things to think about (instead of the news headlines) made a huge difference.

Paul understood the influence and power of a person's thoughts. Our thoughts will soon become our words and actions. After Paul tells us to "think about such things," he then says "put it into practice." By living out a life focused on these virtues and doing as Paul instructed, not only will we have the peace of God, but the God of peace will also be with us.

In our world today, there is much to distract us, unworthy of our attention. Let's choose to be mindful of what we let our eyes see, our ears hear, and our minds focus on. Let's strive to live rich spiritual lives of peace.

## QUESTION

What has occupied your thought life lately? Do you need to be intentional about changing your focus?

## PRAYER FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for this ministry as 2019 is a year of leadership transition. Pray for wisdom, guidance, and discernment as we seek to grow Glad Tidings India in the U.S. to help meet the goal of tripling ministry in India over the next five years.



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