



PHILIPPIANS: JOY FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY
FROM WORRY TO PRAISE • PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 • 5/29/2022

MAIN POINT

Prayer teaches us to rely on God and find our strength in Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is your favorite person to talk to? When was the last time you spoke with him or her?

How would your life be different if you couldn't talk to that person for an extended period of time?

We make time to talk with the people we love. Through conversations, we learn about people and deepen our connections with them. Through prayer we have the opportunity to connect with the most important person who has ever lived and talk with Him about the deepest and most important things in our lives. Prayer is one of the greatest conduits for growth in the life of a Christian. Through our communication with God, we are shaped more into the likeness of Christ as we hear from God and rely on Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7.

If the Bible says, "do not worry about anything," what does that tell us about worry?

We tend to think of worry and anxiety as unavoidable facts of life. However, both Paul and Jesus command us not to be anxious (Matt. 6:25). This tells us that anxiety is rooted in sin. The

anxiety that plagues our hearts is rooted in a lack of trust in God. We increase our trust in God when we connect to Him in prayer.

What in your life right now causes you anxiety? How might presenting your requests to God help you overcome your deepest worries?

How does relying on God—submitting your needs, requests, and weaknesses to God—show Him honor?

We live in a culture where success, self-sufficiency, and accomplishment are highly valued. Consequently, many people today try to hide their weaknesses. God, however, is never surprised by our weaknesses, needs, and desires. But this does not mean that He doesn't want us to communicate our needs and wants to Him. When we are honest before God in prayer about our deepest worries, we honor Him because we are relying on Him to be the One who can increase our faith and joy.

Why do you think Paul prefaced the command to not be anxious in verse 6 with the command to “rejoice in the Lord” in verse 4? How might rejoicing in God help us combat the worry that plagues us?

Respond to this statement: “Worship provides perspective.” How has this been true in your life?

One of the primary reasons we feel anxiety, pressure, and stress in life is that we mistakenly assume that we are in control. When we attempt to bear the weight of life on our own, we will inevitably fail because we are dependent creatures. We were made for dependent relationship with God. Our culture's ideal of the self-made person runs contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ—which tells us that apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). In taking time in prayer to rejoice in God and consider how glorious He is, we will keep the difficulties and pressures of life in proper perspective.

What does Paul say will happen when we devote ourselves to praying to God about our troubles (v. 7)?

Read John 16:24. What does it mean to ask for things in Jesus' name? What does God promise to us when we ask Him for our needs in this way?

Read Proverbs 16:3. Why should we submit all of our plans to the Lord? What does this give Him a chance to do in our lives?

Which of your plans could be improved by offering them to the Lord in prayer?

Jesus is God, and God's name is more than just a title. God is the great "I Am" and He is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. To ask for things in His name is to desire that God would be glorified above all else. God is the greatest person in the universe; fullness of joy is found in Him (Ps. 16:11). There is no greater joy in the world than that which can be found in God's presence. Worshipping God for who He is provides us with the proper perspective when facing anxiety and worry.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

When and where will you pray this week?

What is the biggest hindrance in your life right now that is keeping you from humbly and regularly praying to God? How might you commit yourself afresh to prayer this week?

Scripture is filled with prayers. How could you use the words of Scripture as a personal prayer to God this week?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for inviting us into a relationship with Him through Jesus. Pray that we would see prayer not just as an opportunity to get from God what we want, but as an invitation to a deeper, sweeter relationship with Him.

COMMENTARY

| PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Worry is anxiety (Mt 6:25-34). Prayer is the antidote for worry. Three words express different aspects of prayer: Prayer, a worshipful attitude; petition, a need; and requests, the specific concern. Thanksgiving shapes prayers with gratitude. In response, the peace of God brings power to endure. The peace surpasses knowledge, calming a troubling situation when explanations fail. Further, peace guards by keeping anxieties from hearts (choices) and minds (attitudes).