

Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 15

Philippians 4:4-9

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Bruce: Are we on?

Men: Yes, we are on.

Bruce: Good morning, men.

Men: Good morning.

Bruce: Again I invite you to open your Bibles, please, to Philippians chapter 4. We'll be looking at verses 4-9 of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. He's coming to the end of it. And he uses some wonderful insights on how to live a very quality, high life. So we pick it up at verse 4 of chapter 4 of the book of Philippians.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! 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 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.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Heavenly Father, we pray once again that as we open Your word, that You'd be pleased to reveal the beauties of Your life, the beauties of Your Son, and the glory of Your Holy Spirit. Father, we just pray that You would open our eyes, that we might behold You more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

Bruce: Amen.

Bruce: When you read a person's letter, like we're reading Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, you get to know something about the person. And there are several things that we learned about the person and the life of Paul that characterizes him. Today we're going to look at some of his pastoral experiences—Paul the pastor.

In chapter 1 we saw *the trusting Paul*. He talks about the promises of God. We see Paul as the trusting Paul, a man who is trusting the Lord.

Next in chapter 2 we see *the humble Paul*, as he is modeled by Jesus. Jesus describes for him the quality of life to live and Paul says, “Model that after me”—Paul's humility. And so we see Paul's trusting and Paul's humbleness.

In chapter 3 we see *the protective side of Paul*, warning against false teachers. He's protecting them, saying it again, so that their infiltration into the church would be set aside because of his protectiveness.

And then in chapter 4 we looked last week at *the tender Paul*. Now I would add another word; I would say *the pastoral Paul*. We're going to look at Paul's life as a pastor and some of the exhortations and the things that he encourages us to do, living the life for Christ's glory. So we pick it up in verses 4-9.

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Now he'd been stressing the need for unity through humility. The only way you can ever have church unity is for people to be humble. And having dealt with divisions before in chapter 2, he now begins to deal with another division in chapter 4.

We're not sure what this quarrel is about between these two women. We don't have any idea what they were disputing. But it was bringing about division in the church and Paul needs to address that.

Now Paul speaks very highly in previous verses about Euodia and Syntyche. He instructs the rest of the church people to help them to be reconciled. Notice that his emphasis as a pastor is for reconciliation.

Notice verse 2. He says, "Help them to agree in the Lord." Now the word *agree* means *to be of the same mind*. It means the same starting point. It doesn't mean that you're going to agree upon every issue. But it does mean this: that you have the same starting point. If you have the same starting point, you have a chance at reconciliation.

Consider reconciliation, the act itself. If one is willing to be reconciled and the other is not, you can't have reconciliation. And Paul is saying this. Make sure they start at the same point, that they both start at the point of wanting to be reconciled. When you have two people who start at the same point,--Paul uses the phrase "*be of the same mind*"—then you have the possibility of reconciliation.

Notice the phrase "*in the Lord*." He uses it three times in this passage. In relationship to the world he says, "Stand firm." In relationship to the world we are to stand firm. In relationship to others, we're to have the same mind. We need to be at the same starting point. And in relationship to ourselves we are to "*rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice!*"

Now Paul is going to take us into a little instruction on how to deal with worry. We can call this section or portion of Scripture "Victory Over Worry." If anyone had any opportunity to worry, Paul was one who could do that. There were divisions in the Philippian church. There was the possibility of his own death. And there were major divisions in the church at Rome. And because of his love for the church at Philippi, for his brothers and sisters, he gives them some instructions and models for them victory over worry. Now let's consider this. Let's look at *victory over worry*.

Now what is worry? Well, the Greek word translated *anxious* in Philippians 4:6 ,means *to be pulled in different directions*. When you are worried, you're being pulled in various directions. Your hopes pull you in one direction, and then your fears pull you in another direction. And the end result is that you're pulled apart.

Now the Old English root word, from which we get the word *worry*, means *to strangle*. It means to strangle. Men, when you worry a lot, you strangle yourselves.

Now just go back and remember some of the instances in your life where you worried a lot. Did you see how you just get strangled from all your energies and your strength, what you need to be doing? Worry is a very serious issue. And Paul is going to teach us how not to worry and how to vanish worry.

In fact, worry has some definite physical consequences. Some studies indicate headaches, neck pains, ulcers, back pain. Worry affects our thinking. Worry affects our digestion. And worry even affects our coordination.

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And so from a spiritual point of view, worry is *wrong thinking*. Worry is wrong thinking in the mind and wrong feelings in the heart about circumstances, people or situations. You strangle yourselves when you worry, men. And Paul is going to teach us how we can have victory over worry.

Now worry is the greatest thief of joy. If someone is not joyful it's because they're worriful. They're full of worry. It's not enough for us, however, to tell someone "just quit worrying," because that will never capture the issue. It's no use to say, "Stop worrying! Just stop it!" That's no help at all.

Paul is going to go into some detail. He says that you need to check your mind. There are three things you need to do: *right thinking*, *right praying*, and *right living*. Yes?

Participant: I've kept a journal for over 30 years and I go back and read. And I will say that everything I worried about never came to pass. (*Laughter*)

Bruce: That's very interesting. I'm going to give you a quote here that's going to affirm what you just said. That's exactly right.

Worry is an inside job. So telling somebody to quit worrying isn't any help. Paul is going to tell us that the antidote to worry is *a secure mind*. We see that in verse 4. The antidote to worry is a secure mind—chapter 4 verse 7. "*And the peace of God ... shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

That word *keep* is the word *garrison*. It means *guard like a soldier*. Now go back and read that. "*And the peace of God*"—the secure mind—"shall garrison your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus."

When you have a secure mind, the peace of God guards you (verse 7.) And the God of peace guides you (verse 9.) That's the protection we have. It is guarding protection and guiding protection.

Anxiety can be defined as *being unduly concerned*. Paul is going to tell us that anxiety should have no place in the believer's life, because we have the power of prayer. That doesn't mean it's going to be easy. But he's going to give us the advantages so we can have victory over worry.

He gives you three conditions to conquer worry and anxiety: *praying correctly* (verses 6 and 7), *thinking correctly* (verse 8), and *living correctly* (verse 9.) So let's examine those. There are some great insights here, friends, very practical—

Participant: You have a question here, Bruce.

Bruce: Oh, thank you. Yes, Don?

Don: Bruce, I saw this in Croatia demonstrated many times, because I was wondering. What am I going to do when I get there? What will it be like, everything like that. And the Lord just guided us continually in terms of what I was to say, what we were to do every day, our living conditions. I needed not be anxious about anything. In fact the Croatians have a word. And sorry, Dick; it sounds like a Pirates player--*polako!* (*Laughter*) It means *slow down*. Be flexible. And you know, it's just unbelievable how the Lord just showed me how silly it was for me to worry, because everything fell into place. Everything went well for His glory.

Bruce: Amen, Don. Thank you. That's a wonderful illustration. The key points of this whole section, victory over worry, are found in verses 7 and 9. The peace of God will

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guard you and the God of peace will guide you. The peace of God and the God of peace. They will guard and guide us. So Paul is going to give us three conditions on how we can manage our worry and gain victory over it.

First of all is *praying correctly*—verses 6 and 7. Now Paul doesn't say something just to simplify it. "Oh, just go pray for it." You know, we say, "Oh, we're praying for you." And it means little more than that we'll give people some help when they're in a situation of worry and anxiety. He's much more definitive. He uses three words about praying correctly.

The word *prayer* is a general word. And that means making a request known to God. It carries with it the idea of adoration, devotion and worship. When we are praying, we are adoring God. We are devoting our lives to Him and we are worshiping Him. This is just a general word, making our requests to God.

Worship is the best antidote for worry. When you're starting to worry, in your mind just start worshiping God. Adore Him, praise Him, worship Him. And see how that takes care of some of the worry gnawing inside our minds and our hearts. We need to be alone with God at times, men, and to begin to adore Him by focusing on His greatness and His majesty. The first thing we need to do is to think about Him and not about us.

One of the things that I do periodically, when I find myself in this condition, is that I pull out the 28 attributes of God. And I just say, "Lord, give me some insights into who You are, a knowledge of Your glory and Your majesty." And I just go through those 28 attributes, putting my mind on Him and thinking about Him, not about my own situation and my circumstances.

That's what Paul is saying. When you pray, you're adoring and worshiping God. The thoughts are about Him, not about us.

Notice the contrast there. Pray for anything and pray for everything. Anything and everything; it's rather inclusive. There's nothing that we should not take to the Lord in prayer.

Now fellows, we do need to approach God's throne of grace with humility and deep reverence, because God is big enough to handle all the situations that we might come up with, because He already knows about them. Notice 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 7. "*Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.*"

Now what is it for somebody to take care of your worry? What is the one thing you want to know from them? That they care for you. And Paul says, "*Cast your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.*" That's the word *prayer*. It's just a general word for making expressions of our adoration and our worship of Him. That's the beginning of our fight against worry. We start worshiping God. The best antidote for worry is to worship.

The second word Paul uses is *supplication*. That's an earnest sharing of our needs. One theologian defines the word *supplication* as "*the humble cry for the fulfillment of needs that are keenly felt.*"

Now this is how Jesus prayed. Look at Hebrews chapter 5 verse 7. "*In the days of His flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death. He was heard because of His reverence.*"

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Why is it that the Lord heard His prayers? Because of His reverence. Do we come to God in prayer with reverence, adoration and praise? Or do we come with a list of things that we want Him to do for us? Is He our heavenly gopher?--go for this and go for that? (*Groans and laughter*) See, we need to come with reverence. That's why the first word, *worship*, includes reverence. Adoration and reverence is the first word of prayer.

The second word is *supplication*. We bring those needs that we have that are keenly felt. Oftentimes they may come with cries and tears.

Thirdly, after adoration and prayers of supplication comes *thanksgiving*, giving thanks to God. This means humility—submission to God's will, because He is sovereign and He knows what is best for us. Submitting to God's will means that we understand God's sovereignty.

The sovereignty of God can be quickly defined as this. Whatever God permits in my life is for His glory and my good. And so in humility we must acknowledge God's past favors, God's present blessings, and our well-grounded assurance for the future.

How do we do this, men? Well, I think that one of the things that we have to do is to *acknowledge God's past favors*.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: When you start thinking about what God has done in your past, you're going to see what God is going to do in your future. And the way to find out God's will is to look to see what God has done in your past. When you find out what God has done in your past, then you will see where God is leading you in your present and your future.

Last year when I had one of my multiple surgeries I was a little frustrated because of my inability to move. And I was studying the book of Philippians in anticipation of teaching this course. And I began to realize that I needed to go back and look at God's blessings to get my mind on Him and off of me and my situation.

So I went back and I happened to be in the hospital, and I was lying there looking at the ceiling. And I thought, *I can use my time better than just staring at the ceiling*.

Scripture says to go back and look at God's past favors. So I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1966. So I went back and took the year 1966 and just said, "Lord, help me understand all Your past blessings that occurred to me by Your grace in 1966." And I started thinking about what happened to me in 1966. And I began to think about all those blessings that I began to realize occurred that year—people, situations, circumstances, events. I began to see God's hand in it. And the next day I did 1967. And the next day I did 1968. I was in the hospital for twelve days. And I went through twelve years of God's absolute blessings. And what a joy it was just to understand and see how God's sovereignty was working in my life way back then, when I didn't even know it.

So men, one of the ways that we can overcome worry is to go back and look at God's past blessings to see what He has done, and give thanks for those.

And secondly, *understand His present blessings*. What's going on in your present life? What are the blessings that God is giving you right now? Thank Him for those. Remember, the first word is *prayer*. The second word is *supplication*. And the third word is *thanksgiving*. Go back and remember all of God's past and present blessings.

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How about Ephesians chapter 5 verse 20? "*Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Paul begins most of his letters to the churches in Asia Minor with expressions of thanksgiving to God.

Did you ever notice that when Jesus healed the ten lepers in Luke 17 that only one came back to thank Him? How often do we thank God just for the fact that we're still alive, that we have present blessings? It's a great thrill, men, to go back and think of your previous blessings that God has given you, and how much that will give you a greater appreciation for your present blessings in a spirit of gratitude.

Prayer without thanksgiving is like a bird without wings. Such a prayer cannot rise to heaven and will find no acceptance with God.

Now you'll note that Paul teaches us that right praying is not something that every Christian can do immediately, because right praying depends upon the right kind of mind. That's why Paul's formula for peace is found at the end of Philippians, not the beginning. I need to head off to the path and pray about the little things so they don't become big things. But my inclination is only to pray about the big things. Talking to God about everything that concerns us, talking to Him, is the first step towards victory over worry. It's our prayer life.

Now when prayer replaces worry, the peace of God which transcends all understanding comes in. It's that peace that acts as a sentry that guards our minds and guards our emotions from being overwhelmed by sudden fears. So Paul says that the first step in gaining victory over worry is praying correctly.

Next he says that it's *thinking correctly*. Now notice verse 8. There are six consequences of "*whatever*", followed by two instances of the word "*if*" in verse 8. Notice those six consequences. "*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.*" There is the description of the secure mind.

Believers should exhibit all of these graces, not just one of those, all of these graces. And these eight words are used for the things that should fill the believer's thought life. These are the things on which you and I need to think. And boy, when I read this again this morning, I had to say, "Lord, forgive me, because I'm such a blatant sinner in the way that I don't control my mind. I need to think about these things, not the things that I have on my mind."

The word *think* is an interesting word. It means *to take into account*. As we take into account these eight things, we're going to shape our attitudes and direct our words and actions. We think right (Romans 12), and then we act right and feel right.

So let's take a look at these eight words, these eight things that should fill our minds. And oftentimes, men, what I have to do is say, "Lord, remove those thoughts from my mind that are not pure, that are not consistent with Philippians chapter 4. Remove them from my mind, because if You don't do that, it's going to lead to disaster." I know that if I'm going to have my correct praying, I need to have my correct thinking.

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Look at Ephesians 4:24. First of all, he says, "*whatever is true.*" That means that we need to stand against falsehood. We stand against falsehood. Ephesians 4:24: "*And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*" That's something that we wear; we put that on. We need to think that way.

Am I thinking truthful thoughts? Am I having truth fill my mind? Where do we find the truth? It's in the Scripture. What do I meditate on? Do I stand against falsehood?

Now here's an expression that I want to let you see. Dr. Walter Cavord reported a survey on worry. He said that only 8 per cent of the things that people worried about were legitimate matters of concern, only 8 per cent. The other 92% of them never happened. The other 92% were either imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which people had no control anyway. That's just the danger of worry. And Paul is so pastoral and so caring to write the church letter to Philippi to give these people some handles on how not to be subjected to the worry of this world. We do that by praying correctly and by thinking correctly.

Now in John chapter 8 the apostle John tells us that Satan is the liar. Not a liar, but *the* liar. He wants to corrupt our minds with his lies. John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3. Satan is the liar.

Transcriber's Note: John 8:44, ESV. "*He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*"

2 Corinthians 11:3. "*But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*"

Bruce: Now notice Genesis chapter 3. Genesis chapters 2 and 3 is the fall of Adam and Eve. Now notice. When God gave them instructions in Chapter 3, how did Satan approach Eve? The first thing he said is, "Did God say?" "*Has God said?*"

Here's the sequence. When you compare Genesis 2 with Genesis 3, it works out this way: *doubt, distortion, denial, death.* That's the consequence.

Satan took God's words and he planted a seed of doubt in her mind. "Did God say? Did God really say that?"

The second thing after that doubt is *distortion*. She came back and said, "This is what he said."

Transcriber's Note: "*Neither shall you touch it, lest you die.*"

Bruce: That's not what He said. They distorted it because of what?

Participant: Doubt.

Bruce: The doubt. You see, Satan will clamp you down. And then you and I follow through. Logically we follow it through and we distort that.

So doubt, distortion, *denial* is the third thing. The third thing is that he denied it. "God didn't say that."

Transcriber's Note: "*You will not surely die.*"

Bruce: "God wouldn't do that." And the fourth thing is *spiritual death*. Now that's why we need to deal with the issue of truth, standing for truth, to stand against falsehood. The Holy Spirit controls our minds through the truth of the Scripture. John 17:17.

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Transcriber's Note: John 17:17, NKJV. *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."*

Bruce: But the devil tries to control them through lies. And then when we believe the lie, Satan takes over. Remember this, men. You've got to stop right at the point of doubt, distortion, denial and spiritual death.

Notice Ephesians 6:14. Truth belongs to the armor of the Christian soldier. This is one of our pieces of armament. Ephesians 6:14: *"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness."* It's part of our armor—truth.

The second word is the word *honorable*. *"Whatever is honorable."* Now because the Holy Spirit guides us in all truth, our speech and our behavior should reflect that which is honorable. Men, if the Holy Spirit is guiding us, He's not going to guide us into garbage. He's going to guide us into those things that are honorable—our speech, our behavior.

Now men, I think this implies that we should be governed by dignified and serious behavior. That doesn't mean that we don't laugh and we don't have fun. I'm not suggesting that. But all I'm saying is that we should have proper motives. We should have proper morals. And we should have proper manners that are very important, because we need to stand for those things that are honorable. Does my speech reflect the mind that is thinking about honorable things? Does my conduct reflect the fact that I'm thinking about honorable things? You see, whatever is honorable is something we need to consider, because proper motives and proper morals are important for the Christian life.

Now I notice that we live in an environment characterized by frivolity. Things that are honorable should merit our every consideration. Sometimes it's hard because things are so frivolous in society and in the church. But in the midst of all that we need to think of those things that are honorable, because the things that we think about that are honorable will shape our vision of who God is. They will shape the words that we speak and the conduct that we exercise. *"Whatever is honorable"* is part of our culture as followers of Christ.

Thirdly, *"whatever is just."* Now since we have received the righteousness of God both by imputation and impartation, we should think righteous thoughts. We should, in our minds, greatly meditate on God's righteous acts. Revelation 15:3.

Transcriber's Note: Revelation 15:3: NKJV. *"They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: 'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!'"*

Bruce: That's one of the ways you can go back and think about what God has done in your life in previous years, to meditate on His righteous acts. And we can think about His justice. Our God is just.

Next, *"whatever is pure."* We are told to fill our minds with that which is pure, not that which is worldly. Look at James 3:17. *"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."* Wisdom from above is first pure.

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Are we thinking pure thoughts? The Holy Spirit guides us into wisdom. He doesn't guide us into garbage.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Please?

Participant: I guess when we think of impure, we think about lusting after women, but I think it's—

Second Participant: Speak for yourself!

First Participant: I can speak for you, Sig. (*Laughter*) I've just had numerous conversations. (*Laughter*) But I'm thinking that I'm very much struck this last week or two by the Kavanaugh hearings, and how much anger can arise within us, how much focus on the things of this world that are passing away.

Bruce: Amen.

Participant: And so we can say, "Well I have a pure mind. I don't think of wild women. But I'm obsessed about the hearings and my anger is rising within me about things that are passing away."

Bruce: Good point, Ted.

Ted: So I think that it goes without saying that there are always things of truth and honor and justice and peace and purity, that it applies to the things we think are most righteous.

Bruce: Absolutely. Thank you. One of the things that I was going to mention about purity is that the sins of the spirit are more heinous than the sins of the flesh. In other words, when you're thinking angry thoughts, that's more heinous than the act, because the act is the result of what?

Participant: The thought.

Bruce: The thought. And so the sins of the spirit are much more heinous than sins of the flesh. We need to think of those things that are pure.

Next is the word *commendable*. That means *of good report*. We need to think of things that are of good report. We need to think on things that are well sounding and appealing. The sum of this is really cleaning up our minds, isn't it? My goodness! Even with nonbelievers we should be making good impressions. But we don't do it for show. We do it to reflect the true essence of our hearts. We need to be commendable in the eyes of a non-believing world.

The last two words are "*excellence*" and "*worthy of praise*." The word translated *excellent* was the best word that the classical Greeks had for the word *virtue*.

And lastly, "*worthy of praise*", (Philippians 4:8.) When we think on these things that are excellent and worthy of praise, we need to give ourselves to that. If we think on those things that are excellent, it will lead us to do things worthy of praise. Do you see how they fit together? When we are thinking excellent thoughts, we're more likely to do acts worthy of praise, because we're led by the Holy Spirit.

Notice 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 5. "*For this very reason make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue.*" Sometimes the translation might be "*moral excellence*." The first thing you add on top of your faith is moral excellence. Why do you

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think that's first? A lot of people think and say that it's love. Why do you think it's moral excellence or virtue?

Participant: Our witness.

Bruce: It's a part of your witness. You say that you're reborn in Christ. You say that you're a follower of Christ. Then act like it. We need to let people see our lives more than they hear our words. And so we need to live a life of virtue or moral excellence. Because we say, "I'm a follower of Christ," then we need to demonstrate that. The very first thing that we do is to live a life of virtue to give evidence of the fact that we have been reborn.

"Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge," and so forth. And the end result of that is love.

So Paul says that the first stage in managing your worry, in having victory over worry, is proper praying, praying correctly. Then he talked about thinking correctly. Now he talks about putting those two together and *living correctly*. Look at verse 9. Character precedes conduct, because who we are determines what we do. Our character precedes our conduct because who we are determines what we do. Now we cannot separate outward actions from inward attitudes. Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing the peace of God.

Now Paul balances out these four activities. Notice two combinations of two sets of verbs: *learned and received*, and *heard and seen*. Now it's one thing to learn the truth, but quite another to receive it inwardly and make it part of your inner person and your conduct. Learned and received, and heard and seen.

I call your attention to 1 Thessalonians 2:13. I call your attention to that again. *"We also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God which is at work in you believers."*

Facts in the head are okay, but not enough. We must balance them out with truth in the heart. We must learn God's word, receive His word, hear His word and do the word. James 1:22: *"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

Now putting into practice what Paul just told us—praying correctly, thinking correctly, living correctly,—putting into practice what we've learned will result in a kind of life that Paul attempted to model for us in Philippians 3:17. Paul says, "Follow me as I follow those who evidence faith in Christ." Notice 3:17. *"Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us."* Not only will the peace of God be found, but also His unflinching presence will be seen by following these instructions to gain victory over worry.

2 Corinthians 13:11. *"Finally, brothers, rejoice! Aim for restoration. Comfort one another. Agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."*

Paul's secret for victory over worry, men, is this. It's something far greater than "just stop worrying," or "go pray about it." He says there is much more to it. You've got to be praying correctly. Do we come with the right attitude of adoration, of worship and reverence? Or do I come with my latest need list? What is the spirit I have? Do I pray correctly with the attitude of my heart?

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Secondly, am I thinking correctly? What are the things that I think about during the day? There's so much from the world that really tries to get our attention. But Paul gives us many reasons to think about things that are different, because that's where we'll understand the peace of God.

And thirdly, living correctly. We practice what we learn. Facts in the head are not enough. There must be truth in the heart that is expressed by our conduct. Men, what we think about is going to be expressed by how we talk. The words of the flesh overflow the heart. Our words are the overflow of our heart. So what do we think about during the day, and what do we talk about?

Well, in summary, when we are in fellowship with the Lord, walking with Him, the peace of God and the God of peace exercise influence over our minds and our hearts. Notice this. It's the peace of God and the God of peace which exercise influence over our hearts and minds. Praying correctly, thinking correctly, living correctly are the conditions for having a secure mind and having victory over worry.

Now I would encourage all of us to go back and read Matthew chapter 6, verses 24-34. Go back and read that. Let's just turn there quickly.

Participant: We have a question.

Bruce: Please.

Second Participant: Bruce, could you please elaborate a little bit more on this whole concept of the sins of the spirit being more heinous than the sins of the flesh? I mean, I think they're more difficult, and I think they need to be uprooted. But if I'm angry, isn't it more heinous to kill somebody? If I'm lustful, isn't it more heinous to commit adultery and cause problems in marriages, families, etc.?

Bruce: Certainly that's true. But what I mean by that is this. We wouldn't do the act if we didn't have the thought.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: That's the point. So what I'm saying is that it's more heinous because, in a sense, it's what causes us to do the action. If I'm going to eliminate the action, I'm going to have to eliminate the cause of it. There's a cause and effect relationship. The cause is in my mind and the effect is in my action. All I'm saying and trying to draw attention to is that we need to deal with the cause just as much as we do the action, because the way to eliminate the action is to deal with the cause. That's what I mean by more heinous. But certainly the expression is heinous in itself. But you won't do it unless you have the thought. Yes, Ted?

Ted: The action is more societally offensive. But in God's eyes the thought and the action are the same.

Bruce: Exactly right. Thanks Ted; that's a good point. The thought and the action are the same.

Let me set for you an illustration of lustful thoughts. I'm an adulterer! Now don't go and tell everybody that! (*Laughter*) What I mean is, I still have those thoughts! When I've had those thoughts, I have to say what? Lord, forgive me of my—

Participant: Adultery.

Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 15

Bruce: Adultery! I've thought about it! Therefore in Your eyes I am guilty! Now the world doesn't know that. The world doesn't see that. But in Your eyes, I'm guilty. So what do I need to pray about? Lord, forgive me for my lustful thoughts, because I'm as guilty as an adulterer. That's what I mean when I say that it's more heinous than the sins of the flesh. We need to take responsibility for our thoughts. That's what Paul is teaching us.

Are we praying correctly, with reverence? Are we thinking correctly, with those eight qualities of life? And lastly, are we living correctly, demonstrating the fact that God is our Guide and that God is our Guard because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

Let's take a look at Matthew chapter 6, verses 24-34 for a moment. Does anybody have the time? I don't have my watch.

Participant: 7:22.

Bruce: Thank you.

Participant: 7:24.

Bruce: 7:23, okay? *(Laughter)* Very good.

Participant: Sold! *(Laughter)*

Bruce: Take a look at 6:24. *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Money. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what will you drink, or about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"*

"Look at the birds of the air. They neither sew nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Or which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"

"And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

"Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?', or 'What shall we drink?', or 'What shall we wear?' The Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Heavenly Father, we pray that Your Holy Spirit will guide us, that Your Holy Spirit will guard us,. And that You will purify the thoughts of our minds. And may You do it for Your glory, for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said,

Men: Amen.

Sig: Is there one other thing you want to share, Bruce?

Bruce: Men, I appreciate your bearing through all this with me the last couple of months in the book of Philippians. I'm going to need to take a couple of months off again because there is a special physical therapy for my Parkinson's. My Parkinson's is increasing.

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Men: *(Sighs.)*

Bruce: And I can guess that you probably sense it. And there are some things that they want to try on me to deal with my Parkinson's, and so that has to be on Fridays. So for the next couple of months I'll be praying for you. I'll try to get here when I can. But I'll turn you over to the able hands of Jeff, who is going to fill in for me and take over for the next several months. I'll stay in touch with all of you. Stay in touch with me if you can and know that my prayers and love will be with you. I just want to say thanks for the ways that you've supported me in these difficult days. Thank you, Men.

Sig: Ted, would you say a prayer on Bruce's behalf?

Ted: The Lord be with you.

Men: And also with you.

Ted: Let us pray. In Your earthly life, Jesus, You laid hands on people who were healed. We pray now in the Spirit. We lay hands on Bruce that he may be healed and delivered. We pray that You would give him wisdom to deal with these things and the courage to share these things with us so that we might grow through his suffering. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Thank you, men. *(Applause)*