



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon Sermon Series
Supports Session 6: Joy and Contentment
Sermon Title: The Power of the Positive
Passage: Philippians 4:6-7,13

Connection to Philippians 4:10-20

There is joyous contentment in God's presence and in fellowship with His people, but we will have to overcome the pitfalls of negative thinking.

Introduction/Opening

Negative thoughts get in our way and can lead to all kinds of physical problems. Thankfully, we can also condition our thoughts to react with a faith response. Through prayer and trusting God's provisions, we can be at peace.

Outline

1. Destructive Decisions
 - a. Paul warned the Philippians about worry (v. 6) using the Greek term *merimnao*. The definition of the word includes "drawn in opposite directions," "to go to pieces," pulled apart (in different directions), like the force exerted by sinful anxiety (worry). This is a fragmented mind teeming with distracted thoughts.
 - b. Negative thoughts tend to appear in clusters, fracturing our thinking.
 - c. Negative thoughts come easily in our church lives, at work, and at home.
 - d. Just as a mind accommodates fragmented thinking, our mental processes adapt to prayer and trust with calm and peace.
2. Prayer Promises
 - a. The promise is simple and perfect. Pray and receive (Matt. 7:7). Peace will follow as trust is placed in God's faithfulness.
 - b. Thanksgiving should be included in each prayer. As we enumerate our blessings, we call to mind what God has already done for us. Instead of a variety of worries, we express appreciation for a diversity of blessings. Counting blessings prompts contentment. Benjamin Franklin said, "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor." Our bank accounts may have positive balances and our pantries may be stocked, but if we fail to give thanks for these, our hearts will become unsettled and unhappy by the most trivial of matters.

- c. For our anxiety to stop, a faith practice must begin. Instead of beginning the day with old worries, we should set aside a regular time for prayer. We will discover our prayer appointments will grow with practice.
 - d. Sadly, many times we live in our own strength. Jesus never intended for us to live within the limits of human capability. Jesus offered unlimited potential when praying in His name (John 14:12-14)
 - e. Once a prayer is answered, we are motivated to pray more, and the peace of God ensues with a growing trust.
3. Strength Superiority
- a. Paul's declaration of God's strength was based upon years of proclaiming the gospel in places of persecution. He was inviting the Philippians to discover the secret to his effectiveness. We may know people of spiritual power, but we must seek to join them in their experience of grace.
 - b. "I am able" (CSB) in verse 13 translates the Greek term *ischuo*. The word indicates properly embodied strength. With *endunamo*, the "en" is an intensification of *dunamis* "dynamite" translated "strengthens me." Literally the verse is "I am strengthened by (God's) strength." Thus, the emphasis on strength is emphatic, and the actions that follow our prayerful contentment are appropriate and powerful.
 - c. Instead of impotence, we possess power for *all* things.
 - d. In 2 Corinthians 9:8 we find, "And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work." The term translated "every" or "everything" occurs four times in the translation! (Five times in the Greek!)

Conclusion

Our thoughts contain more than benign mental activity. Our thoughts are the crossroads of God's truth and Satan's temptations. As we direct our thoughts to prayer and trust in God, we develop a sustaining strength and a pattern of actions that grow in maturity, bringing peace and satisfaction.

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