

Life Group Notes 10/22/2023
Pastor Mark Warren Philippians 4 Week 7

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/22. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Epaphroditus and details gleaned from the text.](#)
2. [On Clement.](#)
3. [On the monastic rule of life.](#)
4. [On prayer and supplication.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Pastor began with an announcement concerning *Operation Christmas Child*. Then he acknowledged new members.

1. Do you have a testimony?
2. Does anything come to mind?
3. What does membership do?

Pastor opens today's message by speaking of having a "rule of life," a concept that began in the monasteries ([see footnote 3 below](#)), and that wise people have practice throughout the ages. He then went on to list Elon Musk's "Rules of Life," saying, "If you know deep down what your value is, it makes it really easy to make a decision."

1. Pastor says, "If you are not intentional with life, life will lead you where you do not want to be." Explain.
2. (Look up Proverbs 4: [20](#)My son, pay attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. [21](#)Do not lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. [22](#)For they are life to those who find them, and health to the whole body. [23](#)Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flow springs of life. Talk about how this passage supports the concept of intentionality?)

3. What are the steps listed here for success and mental health?

Elon Musk has:

- A relentless pursuit of goals.
- Embracing challenges. Each challenge is an opportunity.
- It is OK to do multiple things at the same time.
- A passion for innovation. "Just because it's not in existence today does not mean it cannot be in existence tomorrow."
- Focusing on long term vision and goals. He does not get stuck in the minutiae of short-term things.

1. What do you see?

2. Do you have any such concepts? Can you share?

3. Are they written anywhere?

Pastor Mark says, "Most of my rules of life are found here in Philippians chapter four:

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

1. Review. What is Paul's relationship with the church at Philippi?

2. How did it begin?

3. How are they his "joy and crown?" What did they do to earn the title?

2 I entreat Euodia, and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. **3** Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

1. Who are Euodia and Syntyche? (Note: They appear only once...here. What do we know?)

2. Conjecture: How does Paul know of their disagreement?

3. Does it matter which is "right?"

4. In the second chapter, Paul planted this idea, "**1** Therefore if you have any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, **2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being united in spirit and purpose." Why did he wait until now to mention the strife? Why is it good to have time to repent?

5. Who is called to help settle their dispute? What is the elder's role?

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1. Joy is mentioned twelve times in Philippians (<https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart-50-01/>) as "joy" or as the verb to "rejoice," as we see here twice. Why?

2. What does rejoicing turn your focus to?

3. What does rejoicing turn your focus away from?

4. Is it possible to "...not be anxious about anything?"

5. What does this have to do with mental health, as Pastor Mark says?

6. What is the first step, according to Paul, to relinquishing anxiety?

7. What does Paul say is the effect of prayer and supplication?
8. How does thanksgiving help? Why?
9. Is it appropriate to give thanks *before* you receive an answer?
10. Look up 1 John 5: [14](#)*And this is the confidence that we have before Him: If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* [15](#)*And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we already possess what we have asked of Him.* Explain why it **is indeed** appropriate to give thanks *before* you receive an answer.
11. Look at verse 7. What is the anticipated response? What does this look like?
12. What does it feel like? Do you have a testimony?
13. How ready is God to respond to your prayers and supplication?
14. Mark says, "The antidote to anxiety is also thankfulness." Explain.

[8](#) 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. [9](#) What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

1. Do you have a testimony?
2. What happens when you do this?
3. What does thinking this way do for you? ...for your mental health?
4. What interferes with thinking this way? Do you need to turn something off? What is the enemy to this manner of thinking.
5. Look at verse 9. How important is Paul's example? Why do we need good examples to follow in the church?
6. What is the impact of bad examples in the church?
7. How are you as an example to follow? Can I follow you?

God's Provision

[10](#) I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. [11](#) Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. [12](#) I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. [13](#) I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

1. How did the Philippians revive their concern for him? What exactly did they do?
2. What did Epaphroditus bring Paul (look back to chapter 2 or ahead to verse 18).
3. How does Paul know how to be brought low? (Take a moment to review 1 Corinthians 10)
4. How does he know how to abound? What do circumstances teach us?
5. What does the trial of our faith work? (James 1:3) What is being nurtured in your life when you are going through difficult times?
6. What can Paul do? What can he not do?
7. Look at verse 13. Compare this to what he tells the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12 [9](#)*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me.*) What can Paul not do? How much power is available, when we follow Paul's example and rely on God's strength? What can we not do?

8. What do your circumstances change? In your experience, what have your circumstances changed? What steps can counter a negative circumstance?

[14](#)Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15](#)And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16](#)Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17](#)Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18](#)I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19](#)And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20](#)To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. Discuss the trial Paul faced as he left Macedonia without support to go to Athens and ultimately Corinth?
2. How did Paul make a living in Corinth, do you remember? (Acts 18:3) What was the gift he's speaking of that came to him from Philippi so he could minister full time? (Acts 18: [5](#)And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.)
3. What is the fruit, then, that he's speaking of in verse 17?
4. Look at verse 19. How often have you heard this verse? What is the context? What did the Philippians do that prompted Paul to write this?
5. Do you have a testimony?
6. How often have you heard the verse quoted out of context?
7. Look up Proverbs 19:[17](#)[Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD, and He will repay the lender.](#) Look at verse 19. Explain how they correspond. What happens first? What prompted the Philippians to give?
8. When does harvest *precede* sowing?

Mark reviews the rules of life from Philippians four. He asks if these rules of life not only help us, but change our mental health as well and keep us in a great relationship with our Father:

1. When I'm anxious I bring everything before Him with thanksgiving.
2. I focus on good things.
3. I realize that He supplies all our needs.
4. He gives heart and mind peace.

How do you restore health and hope and life back into your own circumstances?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Write down your rules of life.
3. Think of your biggest anxiety in these days. Write down a prayer. Pray that prayer, and then give thanks for the answer. Write down your feelings in response.
4. Make a list of whatever you think of that is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, of any excellence, of anything worthy of praise. Be very specific, at least one item for each adjective.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

- 1. On Epaphroditus and details gleaned from the text**—One of the key arguments in favor of the integrity and authenticity of scripture is the rich detail, clearly that of an eyewitness, supplied seemingly randomly by the authors. Paul is often wont to mention names in his epistles, and although these names may be of strangers to us, they clearly have meaning to those to whom the letter is addressed. In this case, Paul mentions Euodia and Syntyche by name, women whom he clearly knew, and whom he knew to be in disagreement. The letter doesn't mention the name of the elder to whom it is addressed, but Paul addresses him directly in this dispute. Likewise, Epaphroditus, whom we saw was "ill" unto death... in chapter 2 due, not to sickness, but to "the work of the gospel," reappears here. This hero of the gospel becomes a lesson in itself of healing, generosity and love. As we now see in chapter 4, Epaphroditus was a brother sent out from Philippi to minister to Paul with offerings and support collected for Paul from Philippi in gratitude and love for his visit there. In chapter 2, we saw Paul's intention to send him back to Philippi with Timothy, whom they all also knew personally, because news had reached them of his "illness." The word for "illness" used here and often throughout Paul's epistles is *asthenia*, which does not necessarily mean sickness, although that could be an implication, but literally it means "strengthlessness," the state of being worn-out, in this case "near unto death" and so it is often argued that sickness and disease were part of the perils inherent in the spread of the gospel. But that is wrenching Paul's words out of context. In chapter 1 verse 29 we learned "...[30](#)for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me." To travel was a peril. To bring the gospel invited persecution. Paul himself had already been stoned and left for dead, and he described his own condition among the Galatians as being *asthenia* when they would have plucked out their own eyes to give to him. He had been stoned. Here, Epaphroditus had risked his life to bring their offering to Paul on perilous roads. Paul, in return, would send him back to Philippi, this time accompanied by Timothy, who had been with Paul, remember, on their first visit to the city. Relationships were established, and friends would not let friends travel alone.
- 2. On Clement**—Paul mentions Clement as a "fellow-coworker," clearly someone whom the congregation at Philippi knows. The name is famous, as a Clement is attributed the second or third or fourth papacy in Rome depending on the historian making the claim (hence Clement of Rome, not Clement of Alexandria, a second century Clement) after Peter, who was, according to the Roman Catholics, the first pope. Nothing concerning this particular Clement can be proven, but it is well-established that Paul traveled with Clement of Rome. This Clement of Rome is almost universally accepted as one of the first post-apostolic fathers, and friend of the

apostles, especially Paul. Clement of Rome wrote an epistle well worth reading and easily found on line, 1 Clement (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-lightfoot.html>) , to the church of Corinth to help settle a dispute among the elders there, and it is so groundbreaking it is one of the few that almost made it into the canon as part of the New Testament. The Wikipedia article is well worth reading, if church history is interesting you:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clement_of_Rome.

3. **On the monastic rule of life**—Pastor Mark began by talking about a rule of life established in the dark ages in Monasteries. Wikipedia has this to say, “[Religious institutes](#) generally follow one of the four great religious rules as guides to their life and growth in their religious journey. These are: the [Rule of St. Basil](#), the [Rule of Saint Benedict](#), the [Rule of Saint Augustine](#), and the [Rule of Saint Francis](#).¹⁴ Additionally many institutes follow the [Rule of Saint Albert](#) of the [Carmelites](#) or the one followed by the [Dominican Order](#).” Each link is live, for further study.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_Life
4. **On prayer and supplication**—In verse six, Paul exhorts us to make our requests (αἴτημα “*aitema*”, or repeated requests) known unto God with prayer and supplication. Sometimes just knowing the words helps discover what Paul is saying. Prayer is προσευχή (*proseucho*), and it means “properly, an exchange of wishes, “as we would expect, “prayer to God.” Supplication is δέησις (*deésis*) from the verb “to lack,” and it means “prayer for a *specific, felt need*.” It’s a heart-*felt* petition, arising out of deep personal need (sense of lack, want).

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Philippians 4:2-3
Tuesday: Philippians 4:4-7
Wednesday: Philippians 4:8-9
Thursday: Philippians 4:10-13
Friday: Philippians 4:15-20
Saturday: Proverbs 4:20-23
Sunday: James 1:2-4

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.