



Philippians 4:4-8 – How Do I Stand Strong For Christ When Times Are Tough?

March 29, 2020

What choices do I need to make when times are tough?

1. I must choose to find my joy in the Lord, not my circumstances.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17-18 (ESV)

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28 (ESV)*

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, Acts 16:25 (ESV)

2. I must choose gentleness with people instead of irritability.

*Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;...
Philippians 4:5 (ESV)*

3. I must choose prayer instead of anxiety.

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

A. Prayer is the way God responds to the needs of his people.

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. Luke 11:9 (ESV)

You do not have, because you do not ask. James 4:2b (ESV)

- Acts 12 — Peter released from prison in response to the prayers of God's people.
- 2 Kings 19 — God saved his people in response to the prayer of King Hezekiah

B. Whenever I experience anxiety, God wants my reflexive response to be prayer.

C. God wants me to pray about all things, not just big things.

D. God wants me to pray all kinds of prayer.

Prayer — General prayer

Supplications — Urgent requests for an urgent need

Requests — Specific requests for a specific need

Thanksgiving — My prayers should not just be asking God for things, they should be thanking God for what He has done.

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds. Psalm 75:1 (ESV)

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7 (ESV)

*...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)*

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3 (ESV)

4. I must choose God-honoring thoughts instead of evil or unhelpful thoughts.

*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.
Philippians 4:8 (ESV)*

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.
2 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,
2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)

...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Psalm 1:2-3 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. What actions can we take to decrease our chance of catching COVID-19?
2. Read Philippians 4:4. Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord, not in our circumstances. Why is it important for Christians to be known as people of joy in tough times? In Acts 16:16-34, we read about Paul and Silas' experience in jail, where they spent part of the night singing to God. How did God use their joy in the Lord in a significant way? What does that teach us about how God can use our joy in Him during these difficult days?
3. Read Philippians 4:5. In tough times, it is hard to be gentle, especially with difficult people. Why is it important for us to focus on being people of peace, especially in these times?
4. Read Philippians 4:6-7. Paul commands us to replace our anxiety with prayer. While God doesn't promise to answer every prayer, He does promise to give us a supernatural peace after we give our worries to Him in prayer. Have you experienced that God-given supernatural peace in place of anxiety? What should we do when our anxiety returns? What kinds of prayers should we pray in anxious times? While we often pray for our needs in anxious times, what should we also include in our prayers and why is it important?
5. During stressful times, it is easy to let our imagination spin out of control. Why is it important to take every thought captive and refuse to dwell on evil and dishonorable things? How can we apply that to our life right now?
6. What do these verses teach us about handling anxiety? Psalm 55:22, Isaiah 26:3, Hebrews 13:5-6, Isaiah 43:1-2.
7. In the Bible, the terms "mind" and "heart" are often used interchangeably. What do these verses teach us about the importance of guarding our thought life? Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:18-20, Isaiah 26:3, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.