

Name: _____



JOY

Philippians

Weeks 13-16

4G Series - 2023 - cbcfamily.net/4g
Calvary Baptist Church
cbcfamily.net / 512.303.1697 / office@cbcfamily.net

Introduction to the *Joy* series.

One of the unmistakable signs of the presence of God in someone's life is Joy. So, a gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms. Christians should be people of joy. A joyful Christian is a good representative of the good news, the gospel to a world that is often joyless.

Are we the kind of church that brings joy to people here inside our church? Are we the type of church that brings joy to those in our community on the outside of our church? Both are good questions to ask.

Philip Cole
Smithville Campus Pastor

Introduction To The 4G Guide

GATHER – GOD – GROUP – GIVE

It's important that we *GATHER* each week as a church family. Still, God wants us to take what He's teaching and apply it to our daily lives. This is the heart of the 4G Guides. These guides are written to encourage you in your personal *GOD TIME* and in your small *GROUPS*. They are designed to help you understand what God is teaching and apply it to your life. This understanding through application enables you to take what you are learning and *GIVE* it to others.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).



USING THE 4G GUIDE

Each week is divided into four sections:



Gathering Time

On Sunday mornings we gather to worship, hear God's message, and be challenged to apply His word. You'll find the weekly Gathering Time sermon outlines and notes sections in this booklet.

If you need to join us online, go to cbcfamily.net and click "Watch Live"



Group Time

We learn from one another! 4G Groups meet to dig deeper into the weekly material. Group Time outlines are simple enough for anyone to facilitate. In addition, short videos and other helpful resources are posted often on our 4G webpage.



God Times

Personal worship is vital to the Christian walk, so we've provided five daily devotionals for each weekly topic. This is your time to meet with God one-on-one in a guided devotional format. Once your God Time is finished, pray, seeking direction for the day.



Family Time

Family worship glorifies God. To help, we have created simple Family Time devotionals. In addition, to help get the conversations flowing, video or story guide links will be posted on our 4G webpage.

cbcfamily.net/4g





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Philippians 3:12-16

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

Philippians 3:12-16

How To _____ Strong:

- Stay _____

Romans 12:11

Philippians 3:13

- Stay _____

- Stay _____

Philippians 3:14

Finnish / Motivated / Focused / Committed



Group Time

LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week's lesson.

Who did you share your story with and how did it go?

LOOK UP:

Question: Think of a "winner." It can be a team or individual. What are the top five traits that have made them so successful? Make a list.

1. Review your Gathering Time sermon notes.
2. **Context:** As we continue through Paul's letter to the Philippians, we see in chapter 3, verses 12-16, that he gives a recipe for success. The goal as given in chapter 2, verse 10, is "to know him [Jesus] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." Simply put, the goal is to know Jesus and to experience as much of what He went through as possible. That's a tall order and Paul understands that we may never fully achieve it in this lifetime, but it's what we strive for.

So, what is it going to take to get there? Well, much like any successful endeavor, it's going to take passion, focus, and commitment. Wherever you are currently in your walk, you press on toward the future. Leave the past behind, don't compare yourself to others, daily grow closer to Christ, and press on towards the goal.

3. Discussion: Read Philippians 3:12-16.

Verse 12: "I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus." What does this mean?

Verse 13: "Forgetting what is behind," so that we can be, "reaching forward to what is ahead?" (2 Corinthians 5:17) How important is this?

Verse 14: It says that the prize has been "promised" because of what Christ did. Yet we still need to "pursue" it. Why?

(For example, when the Israelites took the Promised Land, God told them, your enemies are defeated, now go fight the battle.)

Verse 15: How important is it to keep pressing on even when we may not fully understand the circumstance?

Verse 16: How can we keep pressing from where we are?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Pursue Christ with the same tenacity He showed for you!

- What do you need to stop or start doing to pursue – to press on with focus and commitment in your relationship with Jesus?

God Time Day 1: How to Finish Strong



Last week in our continued series through Philippians, Paul shared about his journey of faith. One of the important things to realize is that Paul’s story was not yet over.



Read Philippians 3:12-14.
¹² Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.



Circle the word “goal” (verses 12 & 14).

Underline the words having to do with working (“effort” verse 12, “reaching” verse 13, “pursue” verse 14).

As long as Paul was alive, he had more work to accomplish, and he had more growing to do in his faith.

This can be difficult to wrap our heads around because we often think of Paul as some kind of “spiritual superstar,” but even Paul had to work on drawing closer and deeper in his relationship with God.

Paul’s salvation was not just a singular event in his life, but rather an ongoing process throughout his life (the churchy term is “sanctification”). You might remember Paul telling the church to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). And the same is for us!

Last week we looked at figuring out your story of how you come to faith and how to share it. This week, we will be looking at your continuing “faith journey” story.

Begin this week by taking some time to meditate on your journey so far, and then reflect on what the next step is to grow deeper in your relationship with God.



Where, or how, do you feel God leading you to grow deeper in your faith starting today?

God Time Day 2: A Work in Progress



Reread Philippians 3:12 from Day 1.

Many Christians think of Paul as a “spiritual giant,” some even give him the title of “saint.” But Paul makes no effort to portray himself as such. In fact, he goes out of his way to make it clear that he is still a work in progress.

In a race, what does a competitor do after they have crossed the finish line? They stop racing, they rest. While this is a well-deserved reward for a job well done, it can be a problem when it comes to our faith.

In faith, if we reach a point of believing “I have grown enough in my faith,” we stop pursuing God, we stop growing, and we become complacent and stagnant. This is why it is so important for us to be humble in accepting the truth: “I am still God’s work in progress.”



Take some time to give thanks for God’s grace and for God’s desire to deepen our faith.

God Time Day 3: Stay Motivated



Reread Philippians 3:12-13a from Day 1.

Paul shares his lack of perfection openly and honestly. It is not something to hide. Paul understands that his imperfections are not something to be ashamed of, but rather what drives him to keep pursuing God.

As Christians, we often spend a lot of energy trying to cover up our imperfections. We need to stop letting shame drive us to hide behind a mask. Like Paul, we need to accept our imperfections and seek to grow and overcome.



What would it look like for you to take the energy used to try to hide your sin, and instead use that energy to draw closer in relationship with God? What do you need to stop and start doing?

God Time Day 4: Stay Focused



Paul writes about staying motivated and pressing on in his pursuit of Christ. In the process, he mentions an important truth – the value of staying focused on the goal.



Read Philippians 3:13-14.

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

Underline the words “behind” and “forward” in verse 13.



Circle the words “pursue” and “call” in verse 14.

Have you ever watched a video of people bumping into something, like a door, fountain, etc., because they were distracted or focused on their phone? The truth is most of us do the same thing in our spiritual walk.

Paul specifically mentions the problem of looking to the past because it often leads to one of two results:

1. We look at past success, and then try to recreate it rather than growing towards the next step, or we stop trying altogether (recall Day 2 from this week).
2. We fixate on our failures and allow fear or shame to keep us from moving forward.

Staying focused is not simply a matter of focusing on the future, but rather focusing on the right goal. Paul is not just focusing on any goal, but the goal of “God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus” (verse 14). Sometimes, this means saying “no” to something good to focus on God’s calling.

What is one thing from your past or your current life that is holding you back from pursuing God’s calling?

Pray to release this. Seek forgiveness and follow God.



What is God calling you to focus on today? What is the goal?

God Time Day 5: Stay Committed



Reread Philippians 3:13-14 from Day 4.

Now read Philippians 3:14 from the New Living Translation. *I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

Underline the phrase “I press on.”

Paul is using the imagery of a race (like a marathon) to help the church understand what it means to live a Christian life. Over the past few days, we have been looking at the importance of staying motivated and staying focused on the goal. This is important because the race is hard.

Many marathon runners will talk about “hitting the wall.” Essentially, this refers to reaching a point of thinking they are unable to keep pushing forward through the struggle. The struggle is determined by where they are focused. Like them, we must ask ourselves: Am I focused on what I am going through, or on where I am going?

Life is difficult, especially when we have devoted our lives to pursuing God in a fallen and broken world. It is important to stay committed to the race; otherwise, we will allow the struggle to stop us from reaching the goal.

It is time to stop being a spectator and get into the race.

What is holding you back from growing deeper in your faith? What needs to stop?

What will you do today to break free from those bonds?

What is the goal God is calling you to pursue?



What is the first step towards that goal that you will commit to taking this week?


Family Time

Main Idea:
Truth


Key Verse: Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

**Game:**

Have everyone line up for a race across the yard. Let everyone know they are going to run a race competing against each other, but don't tell them where the finish line is. Just say, "On your mark, get set, go," before they can ask any questions. Ask: Did anyone know how far they needed to run to finish the race?

**Talk About It:**

Paul compared trusting in Jesus to running a long-distance race. A runner in a marathon could take the lead and be in first place for 15 miles. But if he stops after 15 miles, he won't win. He will get very tired, but he must press on and stay focused if he wants a chance at winning the race. That is the only way to win the race and get the prize.



In a normal marathon, only one person wins the race, but in God's marathon, everyone who finishes the race gets the prize. Running the race consists of believing in Jesus until the day we die.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians, he was still running. He had more years of his life to live for Jesus. He knew, and he wanted other Believers to know, that running for Jesus our whole life is the only way to win the prize of heaven.

**Read:**

Philippians 3:12-17

**Discussion:**

- Why do you think Paul compared the Christian life to a long race?
- How does remembering the prize and winning the prize help the runner keep running?
- For what prize are we running the race?

**Pray:**

Lord, help us keep our eyes on the prize of living in heaven with Jesus forever. Help us to run the race to Jesus our whole lives. Amen.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Philippians 4:6-7

_____ The Problem of _____.

Philippians 4:6-7

_____ Have A _____ Mind.

Matthew 6:25-27

Philippians 4:6

Have A _____ Focus On _____.

Philippians 4:6

Philippians 4:6-7

Having Peace with God
Brings the Peace of God



Series of horizontal lines for taking notes.

Solve, Anxiety / Don't, Divided / Singular, God



Group Time

LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2.

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)			
Y / N	Y / N	_____	
_____	_____		

3. Review last week's lesson.



What did you stop or start doing to pursue, to press on with focus and commitment in your relationship with Jesus?



LOOK UP:

Question: What is the most famous quote attributed to Alfred E. Newman? Bonus: Who is Alfred E. Newman?

1. Review your Gathering Time sermon notes.
2. **Context:** In his letter to the Philippians, Paul is thankful for them keeping the main-thing-the-main-thing and encourages them to keep it so, even when faced with outside persecution and inside squabbles. In verse 1, he charges them to *“stand firm in the Lord.”* In verses 2 and 3, he calls upon two women to put away their differences and continue to *“contend for the gospel.”* In verses 4 and 5, he calls for their rejoicing and gracious attitudes to be so prevalent that everyone will know, *“The Lord is near.”*

In verses 6 and 7, Paul addresses worry. Worry can be the big stopper of all good attitudes. Paul doesn't want them to be seen as thankless worriers. Their prayers and petitions can't be ones of *“God, why won't you do, or don't you know?”* Keeping our worries at bay, we focus our prayers and petitions, even personal ones, on His will and desires – with thanksgiving! He will then give us peace of heart and mind.

3. Discussion: Read Philippians 4:6-7.

⁶ Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Verse 6:

- *“Don't worry about anything,”* is a bit flippant when not in context with the rest of the verse. So, let's concentrate on the *“but in everything...”* part. What does *“but in everything”* mean?
- It doesn't say, *“your prayer,”* it says *“through your prayer and petition...”* How does the word *“through”* affect things?
- Why do you think prayer and petition are singular?

Discuss this: The requests are the things; the prayer and petition are the attitudes. Paul has been all about attitude in this letter.

- What kind of attitude, or state of mind, do you think of when you hear *“prayer and petition?”*
- What does *“with thanksgiving”* mean?

Verse 7:

- What is the payoff when our attitude is right?



LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *When we focus on God, with thanksgiving, He will give us a peace we can't comprehend.*

- What would to *“present your requests to God”* in an attitude of *“prayer and petition, with thanksgiving”* look like for you?
- Sincerely give it a try this week.

God Time Day 1: The Problem of Anxiety

 The struggle of anxiety is something that is more forefront than ever before in history, largely due to an increased awareness of mental health issues. Strangely enough, these are not recent developments. The idea of anxiety was even addressed in Scripture.

 Read Philippians 4:6-7.
⁶ Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

 Circle the word "worry" in verse 6.

Some translations might use the word "anxious" instead of "worry," but the idea is the same.

Now read Matthew 6:25.

"Therefore I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

 Again, circle the word "worry" in verse 25.

We can read these words in Scripture and often think, "Easier said than done." We tend to think that living without anxiety is impossible because:

1. We lack a Biblical understanding of what is meant by "worry/anxiety."
2. We assume that we need to accomplish the goal of a worry-free life through our own will and effort.

As we dig into Scripture, we will address these struggles.

 This week, take some time to reflect on the sources of anxiety in your life. What are things that cause you anxiety?

Pray and ask God to help you find peace during this week.

God Time Day 2: Understanding Fear and Anxiety

There is a difference between experiencing fear and anxiety versus struggling with fear and anxiety.

 Go back and read Philippians 4:6 from Day 1.

Underline the phrase "Present your requests to God."

Fear can be good when it stops us from doing stupid or dangerous things. Many people have a fear of heights, and that fear is based on the reality that falling from a significant height will result in injury or death. When Paul says, "Don't worry about anything," he is not suggesting we live our lives in an apathetic or flippant manner. On the contrary, the fact that we are instructed to "present your requests to God" means that we must have an awareness and concern for what's going on around us.



We will explore this further, but in the meantime, ask yourself: what is the difference between healthy concern and unhealthy worry?

God Time Day 3: A Divided Mind

 Anxiety is a physical, biological response to fear. The feeling of anxiety and fear has kept people alive for centuries, which is why God designed us to have it.

When Paul uses the word "worry" or "anxiety" (depending on your translation) the word he is using describes a mind that is divided, torn in different directions. (To understand this, go back and read Philippians 4:6-7 from Day 1.)

Paul is not telling the church to have unhealthy feelings of fear/anxiety. Rather, he is telling them not to allow the unhealthy feelings to pull them in multiple directions.



Have you ever experienced this kind of division or feelings of being pulled in several different directions? What impact did it have on your life?

God Time Day 4: Anxiety and Indecisiveness



On Day 3, we began looking at anxiety as having a divided mind. Today, we want to understand why this kind of anxiety and worry can be a problem.



Read Matthew 6:25-27.
²⁵ *“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing?”* ²⁶ *Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they?”* ²⁷ *Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying?*

Underline verse 27.



Now reread Philippians 4:6-7 from Day 1.
 Paul addressed this idea of having a divided mind twice in his letter to the Philippians. In Philippians 3:13-14, he warns about having a mind that focuses on the past, because it stops us from doing the work God has called us to do (review Week 13, Day 4).

Now in chapter 4, Paul addresses having a divided mind focused on what might happen in the future. This also will stop us from doing the work God has called us to do in the present.

In Matthew 6:27, Jesus asked, *“Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying?”*

Jesus makes this point for one reason: worrying about the future assumes we have the power to control the future, but that power belongs to God alone. This is why Paul tells the church not to worry, but rather to *“present your requests to God,”* because God is in charge.

Let’s say it another way: stop wasting energy trying to control things that are clearly beyond your control. Trust in God who is the authority over all things.



Don’t give it up, give it to God. Pray for God to help you put your trust in Him more deeply than ever before.

God Time Day 5: Singular Focus on God



Succumbing to anxiety and worry causes our minds to be pulled in several different directions. Imagine a tug-of-war match with several ropes, all connected and pulled at once. Now imagine that you are the point of connection, being pulled in all the different directions. What if none of the ropes are pulling in the direction you need to go?

When people struggle with anxiety it can have a stranglehold on their lives. It’s an overwhelming feeling of being stuck. When you are being pulled in so many different directions, even if you manage to make a step or two, you just get pulled off course.



Paul addresses this struggle in Philippians 4:6. Go back and read it again from Day 1.

Paul instructs the church in verse 6, *“But in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

Paul is not telling them not to be mindful of the struggle, but to stay focused on God. Remember what God has done for us in the past, and trust where He is leading now.

When you have a singular focus, a strange thing happens – you find freedom.

When you allow yourself to focus on God and His purpose for your life, you stop being pulled in so many directions. You can finally move forward, because the *“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding”* that Paul talks about in Philippians 4:7, will give you the freedom to live your life.



Look back at the anxiety sources you wrote down on Day 1. What will you do today to stop focusing on those worries, and shift your focus to God?

Family Time



Main Idea:

Peace



Key Verse: Philippians 4:6-7

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with Thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Equipment Needed:

You will need a juice glass, a nickel, a 4-inch square of poster board or card stock paper, and water.



Experiment:

- Cut a piece of poster board or card stock paper into a 4-inch square.
- Fill the juice glass about two-thirds full of water.
- Lay the poster board square over the juice glass.
- Set the nickel in the middle of the square.
- You are going to knock the square out from under the nickel by flicking it with your finger. You need to make sure you're flicking straight on and that it's a firm and powerful flick. Practice a couple of times with an empty glass and no nickel. The square should not fly into the air but go forward in the same plane as it's laying on the glass.



Observation:

- What happened to the nickel when you got the square out of the way?
- Describe how the nickel landed.
- How many times did you have to practice before you were able to knock the square out of the way?
- Did it get easier once you got the hang of it?



Read:

Philippians 4:6-7



Discussion:

- How do the experiment and these verses relate to one another?
- In the experiment, what represents us?
- What does the square represent?
- How do we get those things, those obstacles and the stress that goes with them, out of the way?
- Jesus says to give them to Him. When we do, Jesus knocks them out of the way. And what will He give us when we hand over our heavy stuff?

He gives us rest.



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Bastrop Small Auditorium
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Hosted by CBC Prime Timers
Games, Food, Crafts
Saturday, October 7, Bastrop

Sunday, October 15
3-5 PM, Smithville

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ON RAMP



DEEP ROOTS & ABUNDANT FRUIT
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14
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Save The Date!
ANNUAL CHURCH
Picnic
Sunday, October 22



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Philippians 4:8-9

Horizontal lines for gathering notes.

_____ Types of _____:

Philippians 4:8-9

1. _____ Thoughts

Matthew 12:34-35

2. _____ Thoughts

Philippians 4:8

3. _____ Thoughts

Philippians 4:8-9

Three, Thought / Attentive / Virtuous / Working



Group Time

LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2. ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N	Y / N	_____
_____	_____	

3. Review last week's lesson.

What happened during your times of request with God?

LOOK UP:

Question: Have you ever used the GPS on your phone for directions, and it got you to the wrong place?

1. Review your Gathering Time sermon notes.
2. **Context:** What and who we follow matters and Paul is coming to the end of this letter to his beloved Philippians. In verse 8 he focuses on specific words and principles we should dwell upon: True, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, moral excellence, and praiseworthy. This is a top-shelf list, and we need to ask: What if I measured everything in my life, especially my time, by these standards?

And in verse 9 he holds himself up as an example to follow. While this might seem arrogant, Paul knows the importance of having an example to follow. In the case of the Philippians, he has been a loving dedicated example, and they in turn have followed well. Again, it's a relationship built on the common love for the saving faith of Jesus Christ. Paul has directly experienced the peace of God – remember he's in prison – and he wants them to experience this same kind of peace.

4. Discussion: Read Philippians 4:8-9

⁸ Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. ⁹ Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Verse 8: "... dwell on these things."

- How would you define **true**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **honorable**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **just**, and how can we know, what it is?
- How would you define **pure**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **lovely**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **commendable**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **moral excellence**, and how can we know what it is?
- How would you define **praiseworthy**, and how can we know, what it is?

Verse 9: In an age of counting followers and seeking influencers:

- Who do you follow? Or better yet, what do you dwell on? Where and how do you spend your time?

- Who do you influence?

How would any of those listed stack up to the eight principles listed in verse 8? What does this say about who you follow and/or what you dwell on?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Where and how we dwell matters – to us and others*

- Simple question: What do you need to stop or start doing?

God Time Day 1: How Our Thoughts Define Us



You may have heard the phrase, “self-fulfilling prophecy.” Our thoughts and beliefs greatly affect how we feel and how our lives unfold.

There are whole self-help industries built around the idea of “good thoughts” resulting in “good results.” There are also common false religious teachings along these lines. It becomes especially important for us to gain a biblical understanding and application of this dynamic.



Read Matthew 12:34b-35, NIV.

³⁴For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.



Circle the source for what comes out of the mouth. (v. 34)

The condition of the heart – whether it is full of good or evil – determines the results. The Bible makes it clear that apart from God’s redeeming work, the human heart is – by nature – full of evil (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23). But if we submit to God, He gives us a new heart, in His image (Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; John 3:3-5).

Even once we have been born again and have God’s Spirit within our hearts, we must remain diligent to cultivate godly thinking and weeding out all worldly thoughts, bitterness, and complaining (Ephesians 4:22, Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:5)

Identify one nagging thought you need to prune so your heart can be more pure.



What step(s) will you take to combat that nagging thought and concentrate more on God’s work to redeem all things?

God Time Day 2: Attentive Thoughts



The foundation of learning is paying attention to and remembering the truth. Getting into a bad situation is often either simply the result of not paying attention or deliberately ignoring truths. So, to follow Christ, we must pay attention!



Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Don’t let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. ¹³Until I come, give your attention to public reading [of God’s Word], exhortation, and teaching. ¹⁴Don’t neglect the gift that is in you; it was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. ¹⁵Practice these things; be committed to them, so that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Underline each action Paul orders Timothy to undertake.



Circle the items which Timothy is to pay “attention” to in verses 13 and 16.

What will be the result of his “attention?”

(Note: The word “save” in verse 16 is not salvation. It refers to keeping both yourself and others from unnecessary trouble and on the right path.)



Put into your own words how you will keep your attention and focus, on the truth of God’s Word and apply it to your life. (Refer to Week 14, Day 5.)

God Time Day 3: Virtuous Thoughts



Because our thoughts and focus are so important, we need a clear criterion for what kinds of specific things we should think about and pay attention to.



Read Philippians 4:8, NIV.
Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Circle one of these descriptors from the verse that you would like to focus on:

True Noble Right Pure
 Lovely Admirable Excellent Praiseworthy



Define what this word means to you:

Prayerfully focus on this word and its definition this week.

God Time Day 4: Working Thoughts



Effective thinking and focus always leads to action. With that idea in mind, read Paul’s very next verse to the Believers in Philippi.



Read Philippians 4:9, NIV.
Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Underline the action these Believers are to take.



Circle the result of this action.

Put this result into your own words:

Continue to focus your thoughts on your Day 3 word.

God Time Day 5: More Than “Thoughts And Prayers”



Read James 1:22-25.

²² But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

In verse 22, what is the result of failing to do “the word” (what we know to be true)?



In verse 25, what is the result of someone who does follow through with what they know to be true?

There is a common tendency for some people to say they will pray about a situation, but their promise to pray ends when they leave the room. A doer of God’s Word will follow through with prayer – true prayer. And it is even more than just words, it expects God to act. You may have heard this way of explaining this truth: “Someone who prays for a mountain to move will at least get started with a shovel and wheelbarrow.” Taking this kind of action is not an attempt to bypass waiting on God, but an act of faith that recognizes He prefers to work with us and through us – by our actions.

Read what James says later in James 4:17.
So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it.



What is one thing you know God wants you to do that you have been avoiding?

Take action today!

Family Time



Main Idea:

Focus

Make sure the string is pulled taut and then release the balloon. It should sail along the string to the other person.



Key Verse: Philippians 4:8-9

⁸ Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. ⁹ Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Equipment Needed:

You will need a 6-foot-long string, a balloon, a pair of scissors, a straw, and some tape.



Read:

Philippians 4:8-9



Discuss:

This verse tells us eight things that God instructs us to focus our thoughts on. Name the eight things. Go through each one and make sure you understand the meaning of the words. If not, use your dictionary and look up the words in question.

If we are focused on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy, then we know that we are headed in the direction that God wants us to go. Which balloon was most like focusing on what God wants us to think about? The balloon that wasn't on the string, or the one that was on the string?

Which of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 does Satan like? None of them. What happens if we decide not to do the honorable thing? Which one of the balloons would that be like? What happens if we decide to tell a lie instead of the truth?



Pray:

Dear God, help us to focus on the things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Amen.



Experiment:

- Blow the balloon up, but do not tie it. Let it loose in the room and watch where it goes.
- Cut the straw so that it is 4 to 5 inches long.
- Now, blow up the balloon a second time and hold the air in it. This time, tape a straw to one side of the balloon. Thread the string through the straw.
- One person will hold one end of the string. Another person will hold the other end of the string with the balloon close to the end. (The balloon is still inflated but not tied off.) The mouth of the balloon should be resting against the person's hand.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Philippians 4:10-19

Luke 12:15

Philippians 4:10-19

Stay _____ to God's _____.

Stay _____ with God's _____.

Philippians 4:11-12

Hebrews 13:5-6

Stay _____ in God's _____.

Philippians 4:13

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Connected, People / Content, Provision / Confident, Power



Group Time

LOOK BACK:

1. Each participant shares one praise and one prayer request. (Commit these to prayer for the coming week.)

2.

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

3. Review last week's lesson.

What did you need to stop or start doing to dwell on the right principles and influence others in a right way?



LOOK UP:

Question: What is the difference between content and complacent? Can you be hard working and hard driving yet be either? Which is more likely to complain?

1. Review your Gathering Time sermon notes.
2. **Context:** As Paul wraps up his letter to his beloved Philippians, we see another reason for the closeness of their relationship. They've been supporting his ministry since he left Philippi, in good times and in bad. Paul lets them know that even without their support it would never have stopped him from doing his ministry. However, because of their support he's been able to accomplish so much more, and he appreciates them so dearly.

As much as he appreciates their support, their willingness to give will not go unnoticed by God. He will continue to bless them as He receives the glory of their giving.

3. Discussion

In the Christian world, what does it mean to be "called?"

- What does it mean on a macro level? Are all Christians called to one, or maybe just a few, common "calling(s)?"
- What does it mean on a micro level? What variety of specific things might Christians be called to do?

Read Philippians 4: 10-13. Whether called on a macro or micro level, how educated, trained, or prepared must one be before acting upon the call?

Have you ever made an "If only..." statement to God's calling?

Write some examples:

If only _____

If only _____

If only _____

If only _____

Read Philippians 4:19. How might "If only..." statements affect God's "glory?"



LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *God is calling you to expand His kingdom. Say yes!*

- What is one thing God is calling you to do right now?
- How can you get started today?
- What will you need to do better? (Training, education, preparations, etc.)
- Read Matthew 28:18-20

God Time Day 1: When More Is Not Better

 Many Bible verses and other sayings make the point that more is not always better – even more of good things.

 Read Ecclesiastes 4:6.
Better one handful with rest than two handfuls with effort and a pursuit of the wind.

It is better to earn a handful and rest after a job well done than to pursue two handfuls wasting a substantial amount of time chasing the wind. We’ve all been there before; the pursuit of more is not always better. This week’s God Time sessions help us hold onto the truth and find joy in having just enough.

 Take time right now to give thanks for having enough, and more than enough. In a notebook, list several ways in which God has blessed you. Then spend some moments in praise.

Day 2: Connected to God’s People

 To avoiding being trapped in materialism we must remain deeply connected to God and His people – both by serving and being served. We were never meant to “do life” alone!

 Read Psalm 37:25-26.
²⁵ *I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned or his children begging for bread.*
²⁶ *He is always generous, always lending, and his children are a blessing.*

How has your support and service toward others been a blessing to you?

 How has the support of and service of others toward you been a blessing to you?

Be it giving or receiving, it affects you and those around you.

Day 3: Content with God’s Provision

 When our lives are dominated by the concern to stay ahead and obtain more stuff, it reveals our lack of trust in God’s promise to care for His children. On the other hand, when we do trust God, we learn to be content with just enough – as spoken in the Lord’s prayer: “Give us enough bread for today.”

 Read Luke 12:15.
He [Jesus] then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”

Put this verse in your own words:

 Read Philippians 4:11-12, 19, ESV.
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. . . .* ¹⁹ *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

Underline what Paul has learned in verse 11.

Does it matter how little or how much he has of anything specific to keep him content?

 In your own words, write what Paul means in verse 19 and explain how it affects your ability to be content despite your circumstances:

Day 4: Confident in God's Power



One of the most popular Bible verses is Philippians 4:13:

I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.

But all too often people take the passage out of context and end up distorting its meaning. It soon is used to justify all kinds of false thinking and self-empowerment.



Reread Philippians 4:11-12 from Day 3.

When Paul claims, *"I am able to do all things,"* it is about his ability to be content – no matter the circumstances. This *"peace of God, which surpasses all understanding"* (v. 7) is an assurance that doesn't make any sense to someone who doesn't know and trust God. Such confidence only comes from knowing who God is and believing His promises to *"supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* (v. 19)

Jesus is our reason for peace and confidence in a broken world full of grief and danger. Despite all the mess, He can work amazing things through those who trust Him.

Is God providing something in your life that can only be explained because of who He is?

Like Paul, you should share that *"glory"* with someone today.

Who will you tell? _____

In his letter to the Ephesian church, Paul offers these words of praise regarding God's miraculous power to provide.



Read Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV.

²⁰*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,*
²¹*to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*



Take time now to praise God for how He has already provided for you and to affirm your confidence that He will continue to provide for you.

And you can be His hands and feet, by providing for others.

Day 5: My Cup Overflows



One of the most famous scriptures about God's care for His people is the 23rd Psalm.

¹*The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need.* ²*He lets me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters.*
³*He renews my life; he leads me along the right paths for his name's sake.* ⁴*Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.* ⁵*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*
⁶*Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.*

Which of the images of God as a Shepherd means the most to you and why?

Put into your own words the meaning of *"my cup overflows"* in verse 5.



Read Hebrews 13:5-6.

⁵*Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you.* ⁶*Therefore, we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

Notice the connection between *"free from the love of money"* and *"I will not be afraid."* These two phrases are just another way to show how confidence in God's goodness and power is the antidote to our efforts to try and secure our well-being on our own.



Pick a friend and share with them what God has given you and demonstrate to them how you are content with His provision. Afterward, write down your feelings about the experience in a notebook.

Family Time



Main Idea:
Contentment



Key Verse: Philippians 4:11-12

¹¹ I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. ¹² I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.



Ask:

- What is something you would like, right now, as a gift?
- Where did you learn about this cool thing?



Read:

Philippians 3:4-11



Discuss:

There's nothing wrong with wanting cool things; Like toys, bikes, and clothes; But when we want things too much, it can lead to problems.

Contentment means learning how to get along happily with little or much. It's the “being full” feeling, instead of feeling empty. Can you think of a time when you felt this way?

Look up contentment in the dictionary and talk about what it means and how you can be content at home.



Activity:

Get a can of peaches or any other fruit, a can opener, bowls, and spoons. Pass around the can and call attention to the contents. It might say 24 ounces of peaches in the juice. Food products are required to have a description of the content on them.

Ask: What would you think if we opened this can of peaches and there were snails inside? Open the can. Ask: how would you feel if the can was half empty? Show that the can is full. We are content when we are full. When we focus on what we don't have we are not content. Spoon up the peaches into bowls and enjoy.



Pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, help us to be satisfied with what we have, period, and not be running after the latest thing we think we must have. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The 3-Step "1-on-1 Encouragement" Process

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:23-25

1. Partner-up: Partners should be of the same gender. If there is an odd number three is okay but work swiftly.
2. Partners ask each other these five questions:

	1) Did you spend specific personal time in the BIBLE <u>each day</u> this past week?	These are "Yes" or "No" questions.
	2) Did you spend specific time in PRAYER <u>each day</u> this past week – not just for meals?	Any hesitations or "Well..." responses are circled "No."
	3) Did you do something specific to show Godly LOVE to someone this past week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, the partner briefly shares the encounter(s) with their partner and, on the provided line, writes the name(s) of the person(s) they showed love to, shared the gospel with, or discipled. • If not, leave the line blank.
	4) Did you intentionally share the GOSPEL with anyone this past week?	
	5) Did you DISCIPLE anyone this past week? (Ex: Sharing with others from any of the Gathering, God, Group, or Family Times)	

3. Each partner prays for the other: No matter how or what the partner has done over the past week, this is an intentional prayer of **encouragement** for the coming week!

Taking a 4G Break

On behalf of the 4G Guide writing team, I want to thank you for utilizing this home-grown resource. Unfortunately, this will be the last of our guides for the foreseeable future. With changes in staff and preaching personnel, it is not currently feasible to keep publishing the Guides in their intended format.

On the plus side, we have nearly four years of 4G Guide material. Therefore, we will create an online library of past series available to download, or in print. Keep an eye out for the launch of our **4G Series Library**.

One of the advantages of the 4G Guide was how it kept our CBC family connected, focused, and on the same page. It is important for every one of us to now find ways to maintain connectivity and focus. Here are some suggestions:

- If you are not in a **Group**, get in one, or let us help you start one. Our CBC Groups webpage provides resources for both: cbcfamily.net/groups. **Groups** are where we live out our mission and where CBC life happens.
- Tune into our **Daily Devotions**, weekday mornings at 7:30 AM on our Facebook page. Our CBC staff lead these brief devotionals with prayer and a few updates. Watch them live or later: facebook.com/CBCBastrop.
- **Serve!** The very definition of a disciple is *"one who accepts and spreads the doctrines of another."* Our *"doctrine"* is the gospel and our *"another"* is Jesus Christ. Your *"accepting"* and *"spreading"* should be growing together at an equal rate. Find a way to serve so that you can *"spread"* the Good News.

Blessings,
Erin Feldges
Pastor of Discipleship