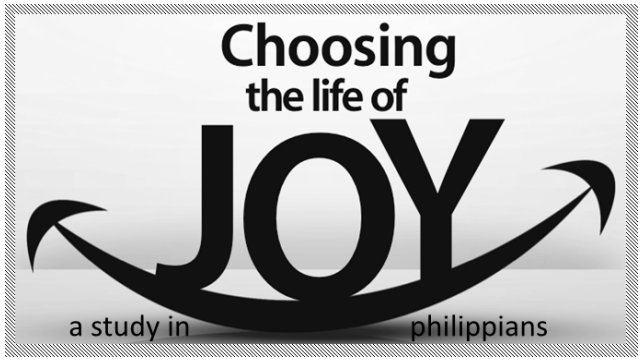
Wednesday Night
BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 20, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY
A Study in Philippians
Worry Stealing Joy/Worry Conquering Joy
Philippians 4:1-9

1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.
2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I urge you also,
true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest
of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will
say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing,
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 minds
through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble,
whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of
good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.
9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace
will be with you.–Philippians 4:1-9

Dr. Warren Wiersbe calls the book (letter) of Philippians, "a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy." We began our verse by verse study of the book of Philippians weeks ago entitled, "Choosing the Life of Joy; A Study in Philippians." The book is a book of joy, and that is surprising given the circumstances surround the book. And as Paul begins to close out this important letter notice in verse 1 of chapter 4 he calls these Philippians believer is *"joy and crown."*

Just for review let's be reminded of some of the more interesting facts about Philippians that we have been looking at as a background to the book.

Facts on the Book of Philippians:

1. **The book of Philippians is written by the Apostle Paul –** The apostle Paul wrote the book as clearly stated in Philippians 1:1-2, *"[1]Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: [2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*
2. **The book of Philippians is written to believers/Christians at the church at Philippi –** As already stated Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman imprisonment to a group of people that were very special to him. These at Philippi had come to know the Lord Jesus through Paul's witness to them during his "Second Missionary Journey," and in response to the "Macedonian Call" of Acts 16. Notice who Paul identifies as the recipients of this letter in verses 1-2, *"[1]Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: [2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*
3. **The book of Philippians is actually a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi –** The apostle Paul wrote this as a letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul's ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).
4. **The book of Philippians was written around A.D. 61/62 –** Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:25; 4:18). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).

Philippians Timeline

A.D. 33/34	*A.D. 47-48*	*A.D. 48/49-51*	*A.D. 52-57*	*A.D. 61/62*
★	★	★	★	★
Conversion of Paul		*Paul plants Philippian Church*		*Paul arrested, writes Philippians*
	1st Missionary Journey	*2nd Missionary Journey*	*3rd Missionary Journey*	

5. **The book of Philippians is called a prison epistle, because Paul write the letter while he was imprisoned for his faith in Rome -** The book of Philippians is actually one of four "prison epistles" (or letters) and most likely the last of the four written by Paul. As stated, Paul wrote Philippians while he was in prison in Rome. The four "prison epistles" are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Given the theme of the book it is significant that Philippians was written by Paul at a particularly difficult time in his life… while he was in prison.

We've talked throughout our study of Philippians of the things that can steal our joy of we let them. Paul encounters many of these joy stealers and reveals some of them throughout his letter. I've shared this MacArthur quote several times in our study together. Dr. John MacArthur says, "A believer's

spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his joy." Let's rehearse again what are some things that may steal our joy from time to time…if we let them.

What are some "joy stealers" that we allow to rob us of our joy… particularly in the Christian life? In the space provided below see if you can list what you believe are some "joy stealers." Be prepared to explain you response.

JOY STEALERS

ex. doubt		

New Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life… namely the struggles, the problems, the trials this life can hold, and when those trial and struggles strike they may cause one to lose their joy, or for their joy to wane or in some case to be stolen away. They may be left floundering in their faith and wondering, "Where is God in all of this? Has He left me? Why are all of these bad things happening to me?"

But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when trial, and difficulties, challengers and hardships come… when things don't go as they expected in their Christian world these misconceptions may reveal themselves in a lack of joy and victory in their walk, in their life and witness, and even in their spirit and disposition communicated to others. Ever wonder why some who call themselves Christians look so miserable, unhappy, and downcast… and it may even be reflected in how they treat others? Think about it…Why do many Christians fail to experience real joy, when we know that it a part of the "fruit of the Spirit" that He desires to produce in the life of a believer? Perhaps the answer is as simple as, because we allow things in our life to steal our joy. In his book *Laugh Again*, Charles Swindoll suggests three common "joy stealers." We've looked at these before, but they bear repeating as we work toward the conclusion of our study.

<u>3 Common Joy Stealers:</u> ***("Laugh Again," by Dr. Charles Swindoll)***

1. **Fear = *"dreadful uneasiness over danger, evil, or pain"* -** And fear magnifies our problems… and steals our joy.
2. **Stress = *"intense strain over a situation we can't change or control"* -** But God can change our situation and circumstances and He is in control!
3. **Worry = *"an inordinate anxiety about something that may or may not occur"*** - And it usually doesn't… happen that is!

Charles Swindoll says (in his book) that to resist these "joy stealers" we must embrace the same confidence that Paul expressed in his letter to the Philippians.

Think of this… if anybody had an excuse for worrying, it might have been the Apostle Paul.

Why Paul might have had an excuse for worrying:

1. **Disagreements in the church at Philippi –** His beloved Christian friends at Philippi were disagreeing with one another, and he was not there to help them. We have no idea what Eudoia and Syntyche were disputing about, but whatever it was, it was brining division into the church.
2. **Division in the church at Rome –** Not only was the church at Philippi experiencing disagreement, but the church at Rome, where Paul was as this letter was written, was enthralled in division. Philippians 1:14-17 says, *"4 And most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel."*
3. **Death as a possibility for Paul -** Added to these burdens was the possibility of his own imprisonment, persecution and death.

Yes, Paul had a good excuse to worry – but he didn't. Instead he took time to explain to believers in the church at Philippi and to us the secret of victory over joy-stealing worry.

JOY STEALING WORRY… ***A Look at Worry that Steals our Joy***

The slogan of many Christians today is, "why trust when you can worry?" That slogan is not new – Christ, Himself, had to address the problem in the first century. Our minds are frequently weary with worry… our spirits are often weighted down. The resulting worry from yesterday's guilt adds to our anxiety over tomorrow's uncertainties. We find ways to hide our worry from others. In fact, we give it other titles… "I'm concerned about…" "I am troubled by that…" "That really disturbs me…" "I'm just interested…" "I'm bothered by that…" etc., etc., etc. In the final analysis, however it's usually plain old "worry"… anxiety, mental distress, fretting, wringing of hands, a lack of inner peace, and preoccupied agitation. Let's first set our attention on Christ's counsel, then look at a string of biblical worriers, and finally note four "P's" to help us overcome and grow beyond our worrying.

Ours has been called, "The Age of Anxiety." People's faces show it (taut, constricted, intense, we say they have "worry lines" What is that anyways?) People's attitudes show it (disquieted, apprehensive, vexed). Relationships show it… there is distrust and alienation. There are the physical signs of worry: we call it hyper-tension (high blood pressure), ulcers, nervous breakdowns, and even heart disease is sometimes associated with anxiety and worry.

What are people worried about today?

1. **Daily provision**
2. **Employment (Nancy)**
3. **The future**
4. **Life and death**
5. **Health**
6. **Personal relationships (mate)**
7. **Personal relationships (family, friends)**
8. **Pleasing people**
9. **Finances**
10. **Witnessing**

Worldly Advice Concerning "Worry": The world is full of advice when it comes to "worry" and sometimes it may even sound "Christian" or like the right way to handle worry. The following are some of the ways the world says to handle worry… some of the advice we may sometimes give or receive.

1. **Don't worry… it's a waste of time; think positive! –** You know what I hate about this one is that sometimes the reality is there is not much to think positive about and this advice can sound very insensitive to what a person is going through.

2. **Don't worry… don't believe the situation is real; it's an illusion -**
3. **Don't worry… it may never happen –** Yet then again it might and it could! Doesn't help much really for a worrier!
4. **Don't worry… get control of yourself; you're in charge – Really!** We are really not in control or in charge of as much as we think we are. Many things are totally out of our control and that's the problem**.**
5. **Don't' worry… buy enough insurance for every eventuality –** What is wrong with this advice? There are some things money can't buy.
6. **Don't worry… be happy; laugh your troubles away –** What is wrong with this advice?
7. **Don't worry… bite the bullet; you'll feel no pain –**
8. **Don't worry… if might get better, but it'll probably get worse –**
9. **Don't worry… get busy doing active things; it'll take your mind off of it –**
10. **Don't worry… have another drink, hit, pill; numb the pain and worry –**
11. **Don't worry… so see your therapist –**
12. **Don't worry… it's all going to be over soon –**
13. **Don't worry… these circumstances are just the "cross" you have to bear –**
14. **Don't worry… it a sin; stop it! – I wish I could! Some people are hard-wired worriers.**

Reality is… we do worry! We all worry sometimes. We may not all be "big worriers" or "habitual worriers." Some worry more than others, but we all have worries, cares and anxious moments. Christians worry? How do I grow despite and through worry**?**

<u>Developing a Christian Attitude Toward "Worry":</u>

1. **Realize that worry is the opposite of faith -** As defined above, "worry" is contrary to the attitudes and activity that God would have Christians to be involved with. Dr. John MacArthur says, "Worry, by nature, is the product of a lack of faith and trust in God." We need to come to the realization within our own minds that God does not desire for me to worry about a matter, but rather to commit it to Him.
   (1) Worry fails to take God into account in the situation
   (2) Worry is a self-oriented assumption of responsibility – That is what Jesus meant when we said, *"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Mt.6:27).*
   (3) Worry is the opposite of faith - *"Whatever is not from faith is sin"* according to Romans 14:23.
2. **Focus on God -** Rather than have a "divided mind" concerning the situation, we are to look to God in the midst of the situation.
3. **Pray about it -** Looking to God in prayer should be our response to worry. Such prayer should be done in faith. The result will be "peace" in place of bothersome, disquieting "worry"
4. **Keep a Christian perspective -** Remember that a Christian's perspectives and responses to situations is to be different.

   <u>Different Christian Perspective in Worry:</u>
   (1) Christians do not seek to escape, withdraw or remove all problems.
   (2) Christians are not indifferent, apathetic, or unconcerned in situations
   (3) Christians know that "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28)

What is worry? The Greek word translated "anxious" (or careful) in verse 6 means "to be pulled in different directions." Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pulls us the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart! Sometimes we feel we are coming apart at the seams in this life because of the

worries, fears, and doubts that press on, and our joy leaks out of those stressed and pulled-apart seams. The Old English root from which we get our word "worry" means "to strangle." If you have ever really worried, you know how it does strangle a person. In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pain, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion and even our coordination.

From the spiritual point of view, worry is *wrong thinking* (the mind) and *wrong feeling* (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things. Worry is one of the greatest thieves of joy. It is not enough for us, however, to tell ourselves not to worry… to quit worrying because that will never capture the thief. Worry is an inside joy, and it take more than good intentions to get the victory. The antidote to worry is the secure mind: "The peace of God… shall keep (garrison, guard like a soldier) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). When you have the secure mind, the peace of God guards you and the God of peace guides you (Philippians 4:9). With that kind of protection – why worry?

WORRY STEALING JOY… ***A Look at a Joy that Conquers Worry***
If we are to conquer worry and experience the joy of a secure mind, we must meet the condition that God has laid down. There are three: right praying (Phil. 4:6-7), right thinking (Phil. 4:8), and right living (Phil. 4:9)

<u>3 Conditions for the Joy of a Secure Mind that Conquers Worry:</u>
1. **Right praying (Philippians 4:6-7)**
2. **Right thinking (Philippians 4:8)**
3. **Right living (Philippians 4:9)**

Let's take some time to explore each of these a little more thoroughly…
<u>RIGHT PRAYING</u> (Philippians 4:6-7)
[6] Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by <u>prayer</u> and <u>supplication</u>, with <u>thanksgiving</u>, let your requests be made known to God; [7] and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Paul didn't casually, and almost dismissively write, "Just pray about it!" He did write, "If you are prone to worry and fret and be anxious to the point losing your joy… well, just pray!" Good advice but perhaps a bit insensitive and dismiss for those who are struggling. Rather he used three different words to describe right praying:

<u>Paul's 3 Words for Right Praying:</u>
(1) Prayer – The word prayer is the general word for making requests know to the Lord. It carries the idea of adoration, devotion, and worship. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship Him. Adoration is what is needed. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that He big enough to solve our problems. Too often we rush into His presence and hastily tell Him our needs, when we ought to approach His throne calmly and in deepest reverence. The first step in right praying in adoration. Isn't that what Jesus was addressing in His "Sermon on the Mount" when He spoke of worry and why we shouldn't (READ: Matthew 6:25-34)
(2) Supplication – The second words is "supplication," an earnest sharing of our needs and problems. There is no place for half-hearted, insincere prayer! While we know we are not heard for our "much speaking" (Matthew 6:7-8), still we realize that our Father wants us to be earnest in our asking. As Jesus says in Matthew 7:7-11, *"[7] "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will*

find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" This is the way Jesus prayed in the garden. The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus' prayers in the garden this way, *"7 Who, in the days of His (Jesus) flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear."* And while His closest disciples were sleeping, Jesus was sweating great drops of blood! That the intensity of this kind of prayer! Do we pray this way? That is right praying! Supplication is not a matter of carnal energy but of spiritual intensity. Paul writes in Romans 15:30, *"30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me."*

(3) Thanksgiving – After adoration and supplication comes appreciation, giving thanks to God (see Eph. 5:20, Col. 3:15-17). Certainly the Father enjoys hearing His children say, "Thank You!" And why wouldn't we! When we realize all that He has done for us we will be singing, *" How can I say thanks for the things You have done for me? Things so undeserved, yet You give to prove Your love for me? The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude. All that I am and ever hope to be, I own it all to Thee!"* When Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one of the ten returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11-19), and we wonder if the percentage is any higher today. We are often eager to ask but slow to appreciate.

You will notice that right praying is not something that every Christian can do immediately, because right praying depends on the right kind of mind. That is why Paul's formula for peace/joy is found at the end of Philippians and not at the beginning. (1) If we have the single mind of Philippians 1 then we can give *adoration*. How can a double-minded person ever praise God? (2) If we have a submissive mind of Philippians 2, we can come with *supplication*. Would a person with a proud mind ask God for something? (3) If we have a spiritual mind of Philippians 3 we can show our *appreciation.* A worldly minded person would not know that God had given him anything to appreciate. In other words, we must practice Philippians 1,2 and 3 if we are going to experience the secure mind of Philippians 4

Paul counseled us to take everything to God in prayer. Philippians 4:6 says, *"6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."* Paul's counsel if powerful and effective, "Don't worry about anything, pray about everything!" was his admonition. We are prone to pray about the "big things" in life and forget to pray about the so-called "little things" – until they grow and become big things! Talking to God about "everything" that concerns us and Him is the first step toward victory over worry.

The result is that the "peace of God" guards the heart and the mind. You will remember that Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, guarded day and night. In like manner, the peace of God stands guard over the two areas that create worry…

The Peace and Joy of God Stands Guard Over 2 Areas That Create Joy Stealing Worry:

(1) The heart = wrong feeling – When we give our heart to Christ in salvation, we experience "peace with God" and "joy in hope. Listen to Paul in Romans 5:1-11, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, [a]we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces [b]perseverance; 4 and perseverance, [c]character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the*

love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For when we were still without strength, [d]in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." These benefits of our salvation… especially the peace and joy in the life of the believer, takes us a step further into His blessings. This does not mean that absence of trials on the outside, but it does mean a quiet confidence within regardless of circumstances.

(2) The mind = wrong thinking – Paul reminds us in Romans 12: 2 that when we give our life to Jesus in salvation, we are to allow Him to transform our mind… out thinking. Romans 12:2, *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* More precisely, Paul tells us in Philippians 2:5-11, in this letter to believers in the church at Philippi and to you and I, *"5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it [b]robbery to be equal with God, 7 but [c]made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

The first condition for the secure mind and victory over joy-stealing worry is right praying.

***RIGHT THINKING* (Philippians 4:8)**

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Peace/joy involved the heart and the mind. Isaiah 26:3, *"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You"* Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long that heart and mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We must realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighted, or measured. We must bring *"into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny!

Paul spells out in detail the things we ought to think about as believers/Christians:

4 Things We Outght to Think About as Christians:

(1) Whatever is true – Dr. Walter Cavert reported a survey on worry that indicated that only 8% of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern. The other 92% either were imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which people had not control anyway. Listen Satan is a liar. In speaking to the corrupt religious leaders of His day, Jesus says John8:44 , *"44 You*

are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." Satan want to corrupt your mind with his lives. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:3, *"[3] But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* The Holy Spirit controls our minds through truth. John 17:17 is Jesus prayer. In it he says/prays, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* Set them, believes, apart by/through/by way of Your truth. Remember Jesus said (John 14:6), *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to Father except through Me."* Think on Him! Set your mind on Him! Focus on Him.

(2) Whatever is honest and just – This means "worthy of respect and right." There are many things that are not respectable, and Christians should not think about these things. This does not mean we hide our heads in the sand and avoid what is unpleasant and displeasing, but it does mean we do not focus our attention on dishonorable things and permit them to control our thoughts.

(3) Whatever is pure, lovely, and of good report – "Pure" probably refers to moral purity, since the people then, as now, were constantly attacked by temptations to sexual purity (Eph. 4:17-24, 5:8-12). "Lovely" means "beautiful, attractive." "Of good report" means "worth talking about, appealing." The believer must major on the high and noble thoughts, no the base thoughts of this corrupt world.

(4) Whatever possesses virtue and praise – If it has virtue, it will motivate us to do better, and if it has praise, it is worth commending to others. No Christian can afford to waste mind power on thoughts that tear him down or that would tear others down if these thoughts where shared.

Here it is again in our passage in Philippians 4:8, *"[8] Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."* Let me ask you, "Where you do find what Paul is describing here… things true, noble, of good report, virtuous, praiseworthy… to mediate on?" Answer: God's Word

Listen to David's words in Psalm 19:7-9, *" [7] The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; [8] The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; [9] The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."*

If you compare this list to David's description of the Word of God in Psalm 19:7-9, you will see a parallel. The Christian who fills his or her heart and mind with God's Word will have a built-in "radar" for detecting wrong thoughts. Psalm 119:165 says, *"Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble."* Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God.

<u>RIGHT LIVING</u> (Philippians 4:9)

[9] The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude. Sin always results in unrest (unless the conscience is seared), and purity ought to result in peace. Isaiah 32:17 says, *"The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."* And James says in James 3:17, *"[17] But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."* Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing the peace and joy of God.

Paul balances four activities in verse 9… "*[9] The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."*

4 Activities Paul Balances in Philippians 4:9

(1) The balance between things learned and received – It is one thing to "learn" a truth, and quite another to "receive" it inwardly and make it a part of our inner man. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, *"[13] For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."* Facts in the head are not enough; we must also have truths in the heart… truths that have transformed us and how we live.

READ: Luke 18:18-23

[18] Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" [19] So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. [20] You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " [21] And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." [22] So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [23] But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

(2) The balance between things heard and seen - In Paul's ministry, he not only taught the Word but also lived it so that his listeners could see the truth in his life. Paul's experience ought to be our experience. We must learn the Word, receive it, heart it, and do it. James 1:22 says, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

READ: James 1:21-27

[21] Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. [22] But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23] For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; [24] for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. [25] But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. [26] If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. [27] Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

James 1:22 says, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

"The peace of God" is one test of whether or not we are in the will of God. Paul writes in Colossians 3:15, *"And let the peace of God rule in your heart, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful."* If we are walking with the Lord, then the peace of God, the joy of the Lord, and the God of peace, love and joy will exercise their influence over our hearts. Whenever we disobey, we lose that joy and peace that are ours, and we know we have something wrong. God's peace and joy is the "umpire" that calls us out.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON WORRY STEALING JOY/WORRY CONQUERING JOY

Right praying, right thinking, and right living: These are the conditions for conquering joy-stealing worry and finding victory. Just as Philippians 4 is the joyful peace chapter of the New Testament,

James 4 is war chapter and give us some idea of where that which steals our joy and causes our downfall into sin begins. James actually has some very helpful and timely words for us in James 4:1-10, *"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? [2] You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. [4]Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5] Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? [6] But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."[7] Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."*

In contract to Paul's words on right praying, right thinking and right living as the means of conquering worry that steals our joy and peace, James tells us where wars, fighting, strife and battles within… joy stealers come from.

<u>3 Things that Tear Us Apart According to James:</u> ***Remember that the words translated in Philippians 4:6 as "anxious" or "worry" means to come apart or be torn apart… we might picture inward battles like worry, fret, doubt, fear, stress, etc.***

1. **Wrong praying -** James explained the cause of wars, inward and outward: "wrong praying" James 4:3 says, "*[3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."*
2. **Wrong thinking -** James explained the cause of wars, inward and outward: "wrong thinking" James 4:8 says, "*[8] Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*
3. **Wrong living -** James also explained the cause of wars, inward and outward: "wrong living" James 4:4, says, "*[4]Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."*

There is no middle ground. James ends that passage in verse 10 (James 4:10) by saying, "*[10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."* In other words… focusing on Him. Either we yield heart and mind to the Spirit of God and practice right praying, thinking, and living; or we yield to the flesh and find ourselves torn apart by worry.

There is no need to worry! And worry is sin! Again, spend some time in Jesus' words in Matthew 6:24-34. With the peace and joy of the Lord to guard us and the God of peace to guide us… why worry! This little quick statement from Dr. Martin DeHaan at Radio Bible Class is a good reminder for us:

Although our joy will wane at times
From worry, stress, and fear,
God keeps on working in our heart
And tells us He is near. —D. De Haan