Introduction: Three approaches to inner peace

- Inward
- Outward
- Upward

The world’s peace:
The absence of disturbance and hostility, free from internal and external strife.

God’s peace: Shalom

To be complete, sound, wholeness of health, harmony in relationships, success and fulfillment of purpose, victory over one’s enemies.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.  

Jesus – John 14:27

With what one person would you most like to be at peace?
Finding peace in relational conflict: Philippians 4:1-5

The Context:

Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

Philippians 4:1 (NIV)

The Plea for unity:

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

Philippians 4:2 (NIV)

The Request for competent counsel:

Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Philippians 4:3 (NIV)

The Command concerning relational focus:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Philippians 4:4 (NIV)

The Command concerning personal responsibility:

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Philippians 4:5 (NIV)
Five ways to diffuse relational conflict:

1. Resolve to stop **PROCRASTINATING**. 
   Philippians 4:1

2. Re-evaluate your **EXPECTATIONS**. 
   Philippians 4:2

3. Get competent, outside **HELP**. 
   Philippians 4:3

4. Refuse to allow **ONE** relationship to ruin your life. 
   Philippians 4:4

5. Remember a right **RELATIONSHIP** is more important than being **RIGHT**. 
   Philippians 4:5
Discussion Questions:

1. On a scale of one to ten, rank the level of stress and concern you are currently experiencing from any problem relationship.

2. Why does relational conflict rob us of inner peace? What price are you paying to allow this to continue?

3. What specific steps does the Apostle Paul give to help resolve relational conflict? List them and discuss each.

4. Is there a relationship in your life that calls for you to follow this pattern? When and how will you follow God’s plan for peace (as far as it depends on you)?

5. Who could help you turn your good intention into action this week?

Resources for further growth:

Margin: How to Create the Emotional, Physical, Financial & Time Reserves You Need
by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.

The Overload Syndrome: Learning to Live Within Your Limits
by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.

Boundaries: When to Say YES, When to Say NO, To Take Control of Your Life
by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

We Are Driven: The Compulsive Behaviors America Applauds
by Dr. Robert Hemfelt, Dr. Frank Minirth, and Dr. Paul Meier
**Introduction:**

- Jesus’ promise:

  *I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

  John 16:33 (NIV)

- What exactly is anxiety?

- What causes anxiety?
  
  o Fear of the future
  
  o Conflict in the present
  
  o Regrets over the past

- How does anxiety affect us?

**How can we overcome anxiety?**
Finding God’s peace when anxiety strikes

_Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God._

_And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus._

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

**Nothing be anxious about… but in _everything_…**

- by prayer
- by petition
- with thanksgiving
- the requests of you let be made known to God.

**And the _peace_ of God…**

↓

_surpassing all understanding…

↓

_will guard_ the _hearts_ of you and the _thoughts_ of you…

↓

_in Christ Jesus!_
• **The Commands:** The What?
  
  1. Negatively
  2. Positively

• **Four Key Words:** The How?
  
  1. **PRAYER**_______: Worship and adoration
  
  2. **PETITION**_______: Focus on your needs
  
  3. **THANKSGIVING**_____: Focus on what God has done
  
  4. **REQUESTS**_____ : Outline your specific requests

• **The Promise:** The Why?
  
  1. Peace and anxiety **CANNOT**_______coexist.
  
  2. Anxiety and biblical prayer **CANNOT**____coexist.
Summary: Biblical PRAYER is God’s antidote to anxiety.

Any time you feel anxious, remember the following word picture…

When ANXIETY pounds at the door of my heart, I will let PRAYER answer it, as I run into MY Father’s arms.

Discussion Questions:

1. When do you tend to be anxious?

2. What are the issues in your life that are “strangling” and “stressing” you mentally and emotionally?

3. How will you put this message into practice? Who will help or encourage you in your battle to overcome anxiety.

4. Who in your relationship network struggles with anxiety and needs your help?
**Introduction:** University of Tennessee: 12 year study

- **Physically** – “We are what we eat”

- **Psychologically** – “We are what we eat”

![Diagram]

**OR**

Wrong Thinking $\rightarrow$ Negative Emotions $\rightarrow$ Unwise Behavior $\rightarrow$ Devastating Consequences

**Summary:**

1. We are a product of our **THOUGHT** life.

2. Our **EMOTIONS** flow from our thought life.

3. What we allow to enter our mind is the most important **DECISION** we make each and every day.
Question: How can we have peace in a fallen world?

Answer:

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9 (NASB)

Command #1: **Dwell** on these things . . . Philippians 4:8

- **True**: Objectively true, that which conforms to reality vs. things that are deceptive, illusions that promise peace and happiness.

  Pre-view Question: Is this the **Truth** or a **Lie**?

- **Honorable**: Translated “grave”, “worthy of respect”, “dignity of holiness” - it refers to those things which reflect the seriousness of purpose of a believer's life (inspires “awe”).

  Pre-view Question: Does this **Honor** or **Dishonor** God?

- **Right**: “Righteous”; used in N.T. to refer to the Father, Jesus, God’s actions, God’s character. It pictures duty faced and duty done vs. seeking comfort, pleasure and easy ways.

  Pre-view Question: Is this morally **Right** or **Wrong**?
Inner Peace
How to Find it and Keep It

In a World of Violence and Uncertainty
Philippians 4:8-9

- **Pure**: From the same root word as “holy.” It means pure from defilement, moral purity and internal integrity; not contaminated.

  Pre-view Question: Will this **PURIFY** or **CONTAMINATE** my soul?

- **Lovely**: Translated “attractive”, “winsome”, “beautiful”; it pictures those things that call forth a response of love and warmth within us vs. bitterness, criticism and vengeance.

  Pre-view Question: Will this **RENEW** or **HARDEN** my heart?

- **Good repute**: Translated “of good report”; (KJV), “gracious”; it literally means “fair speaking.” It describes the things which are fit for God to hear vs. ugly words, false words, impure words.

  Pre-view Question: Could I **RECOMMEND** this to someone who looks up to me?

**Summary - Virtue and/or Praise**: A summary of sorts to “lift up” anything that has moral excellence; i.e., that which will motivate us to godliness; it is worth commending to others.

**Why?** Your mindset determines your **FUTURE**. Romans 8:5-8

**How?** The principle of mind **RENEWAL**. Romans 12:2

**Command #2**: Habitually **PRACTICE** these things... Philippians 4:9a

- Learned . . . Received: Appetite and application
- Heard . . . Saw: Instruction and modeling
Promise: The God of peace (blessing) will be with you. Philippians 4:9b

30 minutes that will change your mind:

1. Read – The Bible 10-12 minutes
2. Pray – Talk with God (A.C.T.S.) 8-10 minutes
3. Listen – Sit quietly and listen 3-5 minutes
4. Apply – One specific truth to yourself / serve someone else 3-5 minutes

Discussion Questions:

1. How does our thought life affect our emotions?

2. How would you describe the quality of your thought life? What adjustments do you sense God would have you make in what you view, read, and think?

3. Why is habitual practice of the truth so vital if we are to experience God’s peace? Why does “duplicity” create stress in our lives?

4. What insight has God given you today to help you experience inner peace in your life? How will you choose to cooperate with God’s process in your life? Who will help you? Who will you help?