

# THE **crossing** **small groups**

## The Peace of God | Philippians 4:4-7 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** To trust God's sovereign and good plan for our lives more.

**Icebreaker:** What activities do you find the most calming or peaceful? What do you do to unwind and relax?

### **Discussion:**

**Intro:** Before we get into the passage for this week, let's explore the problem that Dave set out for us. In each of our lives, the way we view God becomes the lens through which we see every circumstance and situation we encounter. The issue is, often those circumstances bring anxieties that cause us to forget what we believe about God. Those anxieties take over our perspective, sort of like mental photos of what we imagine and fear our future might look like.

1. Think about the circumstances of your life. What are the things that tend to bring you anxiety? What sort of mental photos pop into your mind, and what sort of future do they show you?

**Transition:** The reality is, this life is uncertain and often anxiety provoking. In some sense, worrying about our future is a natural consequence of living in a broken world. But Paul makes the case that there's another way to live, there's another lens through which we can view our circumstances.

### **Read:**

#### **Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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2. Chances are, these verses sound familiar to you. Maybe you've heard them often. What has your experience been with this passage in the past? Have you found these words to be comforting, frustrating, confusing, some other emotion?

**Transition:** These are challenging verses for a lot of us. They may feel unattainable, they might sound like platitudes, they may frustrate us because they seem elusive. But it's helpful to remember that Paul gave us these words in the midst of incredibly difficult circumstances--while he's in prison. He meant these words to be a gift and real help to us, so let's break them down a bit.

Dave pulled 4 elements from these verses, telling us that each of them can be used to reframe our mental images of anxiety in any circumstance. As we go through them, maybe go back and highlight or circle them in the text.

**Review:** Paul tells us to:

- a. Rejoice in the Lord
  - b. Remember that the Lord is near
  - c. Pray in every anxious situation
  - d. Thank God in every prayer
3. How do these four commands help you reframe your mental image of your circumstances?
  4. In your own experience, which of these four commands come most naturally to you? On the flip side, which of these are more challenging for you?

**Transition:** When we practice the commands in these verses, Paul says we'll receive the peace of God, which transcends all understanding.

5. What should we expect that peace to look or feel like?

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**Read:**

**Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)**

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

6. How does reflecting on the truth that God knows all things and is in control of all things provide you peace when life feels uncertain or unknown?

**Sharing and Prayer:**

Seeing as much of the passage revolves around the command to pray, try to allot more time for this today.

To the degree people are willing, ask smaller groups (however you choose to break participants up) to share one current circumstance in their life that's causing them anxiety. Give them space to share honestly. Ask participants to all share before each praying for the person on their left.