



## Rejoice in the Lord Always

Text: Philippians 4:4-7

Founding Pastor Ken Werlein

1. Ken began his message with the truth that all of us struggle with anxiety at one time or another, to some degree or another.
  - a. What areas of your life tend to be the biggest triggers of anxiety in your life? (i.e. Your marriage? Your children? Your lack of a spouse or children? Work? Finances? Life circumstances?)
  - b. How do you most often experience the effects of anxiety in your life?
  - c. How does your anxiety tend to affect your relationships?
  - d. To what do you typically turn to deal with your anxieties, fears, and insecurities?
  - e. As you examine your life right now and as you look ahead to 2018, where are you feeling a bit anxious or fearful or insecure?
  
2. Read Philippians 4:4.
  - a. What was the source of Paul's joy, and where does he point us to for our experience of joy? How does this compare/contrast to where people often turn to deal with their anxiety, fear, and insecurities? How does it compare/contrast to where you most often turn to deal with your anxiety, fear, and insecurity?
  - b. Why do you think Paul feels the need to repeat his command to his audience to rejoice?
  - c. What are the obstacles that make it difficult for you to truly believe that it is possible to rejoice always, in every year, season, and moment of life, regardless of our external circumstances?
  
3. Walter Brueggemann, one of the leading Old Testament scholars, argues that Sabbath is one of the most effective ways we can "resist the consumeristic rat race" that causes so much anxiety in our lives. In fact, he argues that regularly practicing Sabbath is a form of spiritual warfare that places our focus on the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdoms of this world.
  - a. Do you regularly take a Sabbath?
  - b. If so, how often and what does it look like?
  - c. If not, what is keeping you from practicing Sabbath?
  - d. What does practicing Sabbath in 2018 look like?
  - e. In what ways can Sabbath lower our stress and refocus our attention on God?

4. Ken proposed that our ability to rejoice in the Lord always is directly proportional to the amount of time we spend with him – studying his Word, talking to Him in prayer, developing relationships and friendships with His people, and worshipping Him.
  - a. What is going well in your “devotional life” right now? How are you “winning” when it comes to putting God at the center of your universe?
  - b. What has worked well for you in the past that perhaps you need to get back in the habit of doing?

Challenge: What are you going to commit to doing to set your heart and mind on the Lord and allowing him to start increasing your joy and peace in Him? Use the following questions to develop as specific a plan as possible. (i.e. I will set my heart and mind on the Lord this week by doing 3 SOAP devotionals from the book of Mark in the morning in my office, away from distractions, after or during my morning cup of coffee but before touching my phone.) Share your goal with your group so you can be encouraging one another in these efforts.

- a. What is it specifically?
- b. When will you start?
- c. Where will you do it?
- d. How often will you do it?
- e. How will you do it? (i.e. Using the SOAP method for your Bible study; <http://faithbridge.org/news/news-feed/soap-journaling/>)
- f. What potential obstacles might get in the way, and how can you prepare for and work through those obstacles?
- g. How will you remind yourself of why you have set this goal for yourself?

Prayer: Father, I confess that there are times when fear grips my stomach and when stress seems to overwhelm me. But you have promised, Lord, and I take you at your promise. Help me to learn to pray with thanksgiving. Help me to let your peace guard my mind. I am weak, but you are strong. I rely on your strength to help me. I rejoice in your faithfulness and steadfastness. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## STUDY DEEPER

### From Anxiety to Peace

Tullian Tchividjian summarizes Paul Tripp's six action steps for combating anxiety:

**Remind Yourself That God Is In Control:** When you convince yourself that your world is out of control, you are on the verge of paralysis. Watch your self-talk. Are you saying to yourself: “God is in control of this circumstance, He is my Father, and He is ruling this for my benefit”?

**Accept Confusion:** Believing in God’s sovereignty doesn’t mean life will make sense. Believing in God’s sovereignty is needed because life doesn’t make sense. Your rest is not in figuring out your circumstances—your rest is in the God behind the circumstances.

**Don’t Allow Emotions To Rule:** As much as the emotions you experience will be right, good, and appropriate, don’t let them set the agenda. There is a temptation to do that, but allowing yourself to be pulled away by the emotions of the moment could cause you to regret your decisions later.

**Distinguish Needs From Wants:** Be very careful what you put in your catalog of “need.” The minute you tell yourself something is a need, you’re saying it is essential for life. Then you are going to determine that you can’t live without it. It’s easy to attach yourself and your sense of security to the gift rather than to the Giver.

**Know Your Job Description:** God promises to provide. Your job is to live the way God has called you to live. Instead of giving way to discouragement, look for ways you can contribute to God’s people at the moment.

**Run To God, Not Away From Him:** God’s promise to us is not first the relief of the suffering—His promise is to give us Himself. He will never turn a deaf ear to the natural cries of a person of faith when life doesn’t make sense. God hears and answers and works and comforts.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/from-anxiety-to-peace/>