

Philippians Illustrations 4

PHILIPPIANS ILLUSTRATIONS

OUR DAILY BREAD, F B MEYER, SPURGEON

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PHILIPPIANS 4

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

The Worry Box

READ: Philippians 4:1-9

Do not worry about your life. —Matthew 6:25

I heard about a woman who kept a box in her kitchen that she called her "Worry Box." Every time something troubled her, she would write it down on a piece of paper and put it in the box. She resolved not to think about her problems as long as they were in the box. This enabled the woman to put her troubles completely out of mind. She knew they could be dealt with later.

Occasionally she would take out a slip of paper and review the concern written on it. Because she had not been drained by anxiety, she was relaxed and better able to find the solution to her problem. Many times she discovered that a specific worry no longer existed.

Writing your worries on paper and putting them in a box may be helpful, but how much better it is to place them in the hands of God. Worry robs us of joy, drains us of energy, stunts our spiritual growth, and dishonors God. Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).

Let's believe the Lord's promises and trust Him to meet our needs. Placing our problems in His hands is far better than putting them in a worry box. —Richard De Haan

Never a trial that He is not there,
Never a burden that He does not bear;
Never a sorrow that He does not share—
Moment by moment, I'm under His care.
—Whittle

When we put our cares in God's hands,
He puts His peace in our heart

PHILIPPIANS 4:2

Shooting the Saints --It is said that when the British and French were fighting in Canada in the 1750s, Admiral Phipps, commander of the British fleet, was told to anchor outside Quebec. He was given orders to wait for the British land forces to arrive, then support them when they attacked the city. Phipps' navy arrived early. As the admiral waited, he became annoyed by the statues of the saints that adorned the towers of a nearby cathedral, so he commanded his men to shoot at them with the ships' cannons. No one knows how many rounds were fired or how many statues were knocked out, but when the land forces arrived and the signal was given to attack, the admiral was of no help. He had used up all his ammunition shooting at the "saints."

PHILIPPIANS 4:4 Arranging Your Mind

READ: Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! —PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Several years ago I read a story about a 92-year-old Christian woman who was legally blind. In spite of her limitation, she was always neatly dressed, with her hair carefully brushed and her makeup tastefully applied. Each morning she would meet the new day with eagerness.

After her husband of 70 years died, it became necessary for her to go to a nursing home where she could receive proper care. On the day of the move, a helpful neighbor drove her there and guided her into the lobby. Her room wasn't ready, so she waited patiently in the lobby for several hours.

When an attendant finally came for her, she smiled sweetly as she maneuvered her walker to the elevator. The staff member described her room to her, including the new curtains that had been hung on the windows. "I love it," she declared. "But Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen your room yet," the attendant replied. "That doesn't have anything to do with it," she said. "Happiness is something you choose. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how it's arranged. It's how I arrange my mind."

The Bible says, "Rejoice in the Lord" (Philippians 4:4). Remind yourself often of all that Jesus has given to you and be thankful. That's how to arrange your mind. —David H. Roper

God takes delight when we rejoice
In all that He has done
And when we thank Him for the love
He shows us through His Son. —D. De Haan

The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4 Self-Pity Or Rejoicing?

READ: Philippians 4:1-8

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! —PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Temperament seems to be something that each of us is born with. Some of us have upbeat dispositions, while others play the music of life in a minor key. Yet how we respond to life's trials also affects our overall disposition.

For example, Fanny Crosby lost her sight when she was only 6 weeks old. She lived into her nineties, composing thousands of beloved hymns. On her 92nd birthday she cheerfully said, "If in all the world you can find a happier person than I am, do bring him to me. I should like to shake his hand."

What enabled Fanny Crosby to experience such joy in the face of what many would term a "tragedy"? At an early age she chose to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). In fact, Fanny carried out a resolution she made when she was only 8 years old: "How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't. To weep and sigh because I'm blind, I cannot and I won't."

Let's remember that "the joy of the Lord is [our] strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Let's also take comfort in the teachings of Jesus, who in John 15:11 said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." When faced with the choice of self-pity or rejoicing, let's respond with rejoicing. —Vernon C Grounds

Be this the purpose of my soul,
My solemn, my determined choice:
To yield to God's supreme control,
And in my every trial rejoice. —Anon.

Rather than complain about the thorns on roses, be thankful for roses among the thorns.

PHILIPPIANS 4:5 How Gentle Are You?

READ: Titus 3:1-8

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. —Philippians 4:5

During my years as a pastor, I encountered many Christians who were anything but gentle. They had no patience for fellow believers with character flaws or who were involved in sinful practices. They also showed little kindness toward nonbelievers. They thought that gospel messages should always include dire warnings of the torments of hell.

Recently I heard about a company that had decided to open their stores on Sunday. Because they were located in an area with many churches, the corporation received scores of condemning letters from angry Christians. Some even said they were glad there was an eternal hell for those who had made this decision. Christian and non-Christian employees were offended and embarrassed. Lack of gentleness had harmed Christ's cause.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were quick to judge and lacked gentleness. They criticized Jesus because He ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19). They were shocked because He showed concern for these people instead of harshly condemning them. He didn't approve of what they did, but He saw them as sinners created in God's image whom He had come to save.

Let's follow Christ's example. —Herbert Vander Lugt

O to be like Him, tender and kind,

Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;

More like to Jesus, day after day,

Filled with His Spirit, now and alway. —Ellsworth

Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength. —Francis de Sales

PHILIPPIANS 4:6 F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

In nothing be anxious. (r.v.) Php 4:6

Black care! It has always been among men, and perhaps more so today than ever, when the pressure of life is heavier and the constraint of circumstances more imperious. Are there not hours in which the clouds gather densely over the Ark of God, and the stoutest hearts tremble? Is it easy for even the Christian soul to look on a family of little ones, sleeping soundly, and know that they will certainly awake hungry for food, of which the cupboard is bare, and have no tinge of anxiety?

It is at such times that the apostle bids us pray. "Make your requests known unto God." We have not to agonise before Him, as though, like the priests of Baal, who cried and cut themselves, we shall move Him by our anguish. Calmly, quietly, simply, make your requests known. Take your burden into his presence and lay it down there. He is your Father. He who made the body, and gave it you, will see to the supply of its needs. Your health, your children, the condition of his Church, are dear to Him who notices a falling sparrow, and by whom the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

We shall not escape life's discipline. We may expect to abound here, and to be abased there. But amid all, Peace, God's white-winged sentinel-angel, shall come down to keep the heart with its affections, the mind with its thoughts. Worry, unrest, anxiety will stand without, as the noise of the street breaks in vain on the double windows of the city counting-house, whilst the child of God learns humbly and patiently the lesson of his Father's love. Careful for nothing; prayerful and thankful in everything.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6,19

Five-Finger Prayers

Read: James 5:13-18

Pray for one another. --James 5:16

Prayer is a conversation with God, not a formula. Yet sometimes we might need to use a "method" to freshen up our prayer time. We can pray the Psalms or other Scriptures (such as The Lord's Prayer), or use the ACTS method (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication). I recently came across this "Five-Finger Prayer" to use as a guide when praying for others:

* When you fold your hands, the thumb is nearest you. So begin by praying for those closest to you--your loved ones (Philippians 1:3-5).

* The index finger is the pointer. Pray for those who teach--Bible teachers and preachers, and those who teach children (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

* The next finger is the tallest. It reminds you to pray for those in authority over you--national and local leaders, and your supervisor at work (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

* The fourth finger is usually the weakest. Pray for those who are in trouble or who are suffering (James 5:13-16).

* Then comes your little finger. It reminds you of your smallness in relation to God's greatness. Ask Him to supply your needs (Philippians 4:6,19).

Whatever method you use, just talk with your Father. He wants to hear what's on your heart. --Anne Cetas

Our prayers ascend to heaven's throne

Regardless of the form we use;

Our Father always hears His own

Regardless of the words we choose. --D. De Haan

It's not the words we pray that matter, it's the condition of our heart.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

The story is told of a man who got a permit to open the first tavern in a small town. The members of a local church were strongly opposed to the bar, so they began to pray that God would intervene. A few days before the tavern was scheduled to open, lightning hit the structure and it burned to the ground.

The people of the church were surprised but pleased—until they received notice that the would-be tavern owner was suing them. He contended that their prayers were responsible for the burning of the building. They denied the charge.

At the conclusion of the preliminary hearing, the judge wryly remarked, "At this point I don't know what my decision will be, but it seems that the tavern owner believes in the power of prayer and these church people don't."

Lord, thank You for answering our prayers even when our faith is weak. Increase our faith and help us to pray more expectantly! — H. V Lugt

PRAYER WITHOUT EXPECTANCY MAY BE UNBELIEF IN DISGUISE.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Author A. B. Simpson told about an old farmer who plowed around a large rock in his field year after year. He had broken one cultivator and two plowshares by hitting it. Each time he saw that obstacle, he grumbled about how much trouble the rock had caused.

One day he decided to dig it up and be done with it. Putting a large crowbar under one side, he found to his surprise that the rock was less than a foot thick. Soon he had pried it out of the ground and was carting it away in his wagon. He smiled to think how that "big" old rock had caused him so much needless frustration.

Not every trouble can be removed as easily as that stone. But prayer is an effective way to handle difficulties of all sizes. Using the leverage of prayer with our problems can keep us from becoming victims of worry. —D J De Haan

Fervent prayer dispels anxious care.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Say "Mercy!"

READ: Philippians 4:1-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer ... let your requests be made known to God. —PHILIPPIANS 4:6

You may have played the game when you were a child. You interlace your fingers with someone else's and try to bend the other's hands back until one or the other cries "Mercy!" The winner is the one who gets the other person to surrender.

Sometimes we try to play "Mercy" with God when we pray. We have a request that we desperately want answered in a certain way, so we try to "bend His fingers back" and get Him to give in. When it seems we aren't winning, we try a little harder to convince Him by begging or bargaining. We may even give up grudgingly and say, "Lord, You always win! That's not fair!"

God does want honesty of heart. But occasionally in our honesty a demanding spirit comes out. Deep down we know that prayer is not meant to be a contest with God that we try to win. In our wiser moments, we make our requests known to our Lord, surrender them to Him, rely on His grace, and wait for His answers (Philippians 4:6-7). Author Hannah Whitall Smith said, "Be glad and eager to throw yourself unreservedly into His loving arms, and to hand over the reins of government to Him."

Instead of praying with grudging resignation, "Lord, You always win," surrender to Him. Say "Mercy!"

—Anne Cetas

In Jesus' name we voice our prayers—

The Bible tells us to;

But may we never use that name

To tell God what to do. —D. De Haan

Prayer isn't a time to give orders but to report for duty!

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

The Leverage Of Prayer

Read: Philippians 4:1-7

In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. --Philippians 4:6

Pastor and author A. B. Simpson told about an old farmer who plowed around a large rock in his field year after year. He had broken one cultivator and two plowshares by hitting it. Each time he saw that obstacle, he grumbled about how much trouble the rock had caused.

One day he decided to dig it up and be done with it. Putting a large crowbar under one side, he found to his surprise that the rock was less than a foot thick. Soon he had pried it out of the ground and was carting it away in his wagon. He smiled to think how that "big" old rock had caused him so much needless frustration.

Not every trouble can be removed as easily as that stone. But prayer is an effective way to handle difficulties of all sizes. Paul told us to use prayer in every situation (Phil. 4:6).

Sometimes when we pray, God dispels difficulty as easily as the sun burns off a morning mist. At other times He shows us that our problems are much smaller than we had thought. But some obstacles are immovable, and we must learn to live with them. Prayer then becomes the channel through which God's wisdom, strength, and patience flow.

Using the leverage of prayer with our problems can help keep us from becoming victims of worry. --D J De Haan

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer! --Scriven

Fervent prayer dispels anxious care

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Pressuring God

READ: Matthew 26:36-46

O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done. —Matthew 26:42

Under General George Patton's command in World War II, the Third Army had been driving back the Nazis until fog and rain forced the troops to stop. Patton telephoned a chaplain to ask, "Do you have a good prayer for weather?" Immediately the chaplain complied with the general's request. He wrote a prayer, which Patton ordered to be printed and distributed to the 250,000 soldiers under his command, directing them to pray for clear weather.

The Scriptures teach us that God wants us to bring our requests to Him, and we can be confident that He cares and will answer (Philippians 4:6; 1 John 5:14-15). But He is never obligated to answer in the way we want or just because many people are praying.

When the Son of God was agonizing in Gethsemane, He made His request in humble submission to His Father by saying, "Your will

be done" (Matthew 26:42). That Gethsemane principle ought to govern all our praying.

The Father's will is always infused with infinite love and wisdom. So instead of trying to pressure God because we think He's obligated to us, we as trustful children gladly commit to Him our desires. Whatever He grants will prove in the end to be the best of blessings. —Vernon C Grounds

So lift up your heart to the heavens;

There's a loving and kind Father there

Who offers release and comfort and peace

In the silent communion of prayer. —Anon.

Instead of trying to twist God's arm, put yourself in His hands

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Is It Time To Pray?

READ: Philippians 4:1-7

In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. —Philippians 4:6

When people face trials, they often turn to prayer only as a last resort. I knew a man who was fighting a valiant battle with cancer. As people observed the gradual effect on his body and lifestyle, one person said, "Well, they've tried everything else. I guess it's time to begin praying."

Another man was going through an extremely difficult time at work. It was a crisis of major proportions that had ominous implications for him and for the future of his company. He just couldn't resolve it. Finally he said, "I've tried everything I know to get through this situation and nothing has worked. It's time to start praying."

In both of these instances, prayer was seen as a last-ditch effort to resolve the problem. Only after all other options were eliminated did the person decide to pray. It was a desperate "grasping at straws."

Instead of prayer being a last resort, it should be one of the first things we do. The Lord answers prayer, and He wants us to come to Him continually with all of our needs (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Bible tells us to "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer ... let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

So don't wait. It's always time to pray. —David C. Egner

Any hour when helping others

Or when bearing heavy care

Is the time to call our Father—

It's the proper time for prayer. —Zimmerman

Prayer should be our first response rather than our last resort.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

A friend of mine took his small son with him one day to run some errands. When lunchtime arrived, the two of them went to a familiar diner for a sandwich. The father sat down on one of the stools at the counter and lifted the boy up to the seat beside him. They ordered lunch, and when the waiter brought the food the father said, "Son, we'll just have a silent prayer." Dad got through praying first and waited for his son to finish his prayer, but he just sat with his head bowed for an unusually long time. When he finally looked up, his father asked him, "What in the world were you praying about all that time?" "How do I know?" the child replied. "It was a silent prayer."

A lot of our praying is like that, whether silent or aloud. We don't say anything to the Lord. We call words to mind, but they are repetitious or insincere. What the Lord needs to hear from us is earnest, heartfelt prayer—prompted by the Holy Spirit and offered in the name of the Lord Jesus. The result, according to Paul, is "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding," that "will guard [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

We need to take prayer seriously. Closing our eyes, bowing our heads, and repeating nice-sounding words is insufficient. Our

requests must be in line with God's Word, and they must come from sincere hearts. —P.R.V.

True prayer does not require eloquence but earnestness.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

More Than Wishing

READ: Matthew 6:5-15

Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. —Matthew 6:8

As a child, C. S. Lewis enjoyed reading the books of E. Nesbit, especially *Five Children and It*. In this book, brothers and sisters on a summer holiday discover an ancient sand fairy who grants them one wish each day. But every wish brings the children more trouble than happiness because they can't foresee the results of getting everything they ask for.

The Bible tells us to make our requests known to God (Philippians 4:6). But prayer is much more than telling God what we want Him to do for us. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He began by reminding them, "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

What we call "The Lord's Prayer" is more about living in a growing, trusting relationship with our heavenly Father than about getting what we want from Him. As we grow in faith, our prayers will become less of a wish list and more of an intimate conversation with the Lord.

Toward the end of his life, C. S. Lewis wrote, "If God had granted all the silly prayers I've made in my life, where should I be now?"

Prayer is placing ourselves in the presence of God to receive from Him what we really need.—David C. McCasland

We grasp but a thread of the garment of prayer;

We reel at the thought of His infinite care;

We cannot conceive of a God who will say:

"Be careful for nothing; in everything pray." —Farrell

Our highest privilege is to talk to God; our highest duty is to listen to Him.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

FAITH'S CHECKBOOK - SPURGEON

Prayer, Thanksgiving, Praise

NO care, but all prayer. No anxiety, but much joyful communion with God. Carry your desires to the Lord of your life, the guardian of your soul. Go to Him with two portions of prayer and one of fragrant praise. Do not pray doubtfully, but thankfully. Consider that you have your petitions, and therefore thank God for His grace. He is giving you grace; give Him thanks. Hide nothing. Allow no want to lie rankling in your bosom; "make known your requests." Run not to man. Go only to your God, the Father of Jesus, who loves you in Him. This shall bring you God's own peace. You shall not be able to understand the peace which you shall enjoy. It will enfold you in its infinite embrace. Heart and mind through Christ Jesus shall be steeped in a sea of rest. Come life or death, poverty, pain, slander, you shall dwell in Jesus above every ruffling wind or darkening cloud. Will you not obey this dear command? Yes, Lord, I do believe thee; but, I beseech thee help mine unbelief.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

The Promise Of Peace

READ: Luke 2:8-15

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. —2 Peter 1:2

At Christmastime we love to hear the angelic message of peace on earth. But the message that's repeated in songs and sermons needs to be heard and heeded every day of the year. We continually hear reports of tragedies around the globe. And we may be troubled by personal problems and crises. We long for and pray for peace.

The Bible provides an answer to that plea for peace. To start with, the apostle Paul assured us in Romans 5:1 that it is possible to

have peace with God. Yes, we disobedient and sinful creatures can enter into a state of reconciliation with God through faith in His Son Jesus (v.11).

We can enjoy emotional peace as we cast our cares on the Savior (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7). There is also the possibility of interpersonal peace. In Romans 12:18, Paul urged believers, "As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Peace with others can become a reality. Best of all, we can anticipate global peace when our Savior, the Prince of Peace, returns.

By our prayers and by our example, let us be peacemakers who help to fulfill the angelic message: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14). —Vernon C Grounds

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within;

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?

Jesus, we know, and He is on the throne. —Bickersteth

Only the Prince of Peace can bring lasting peace

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27).

A dear friend of many years, Ethel La Botz, sent me a letter in which she wrote: "As I was reading your devotional in Our Daily Bread called 'The Peace Corps,' I was reminded of what a missionary in Brazil told me when we were there. Reared in a godless home, she was unhappy and dissatisfied with life. Then one day she noticed an advertisement for the Peace Corps. The thought came to her, that's what's missing in my life—peace. So she joined and was sent to Irian Jaya, but she soon realized she couldn't find what she was lacking. Through her work, however, she came in contact with an old Indian. He was different from anyone she had ever met. She inquired as to what caused his peace, joy, and contentment, and he told her that Jesus was in his heart. So she started reading the Bible. Through the Word and the witness of the Indian friend, she found the peace that only Christ can give."

That same peace is available to all who by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," said Paul in Romans 5:1. Those who have peace with God can also experience the peace of God. This is what John 14 is all about. The Bible says, "Let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Yes, in this troubled world we can find peace—the wonderful, satisfying peace of God! —R W De Haan

No God, no peace. Know God, know peace.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Have You Prayed?

Read: Philippians 4:4-13

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything ... let your requests be made known to God. --Philippians 4:6

Several years ago I moved to England, but I have traveled back to the USA many times, often staying with the same families. One family lived in a farmhouse where a tiny upstairs room always awaited me.

I will never forget one visit when, as usual, I lugged my suitcase up the familiar stairs. This time, however, a secret burden on my heart felt heavier than my luggage. As I neared the top of the steps, I saw an old plaque that I had forgotten. It read:

Have You Prayed About It?

Panting physically and spiritually, I had to admit, "No, I haven't!" So I slipped to my knees and finally talked to God about the problem.

Instead of being anxious for nothing, I had become anxious about everything. Instead of praying about everything, I had prayed about nothing. But now, through prayer, my heavy load of worry became God's, and His lightweight gift of peace became mine.

In his book *Tyranny of the Urgent*, Charles Hummel writes that if we are prayerless, "we are saying, with our actions if not our lips, that we do not need God." The deciding factor on how we carry our burdens lies in our answer to the question on that old-fashioned plaque: Have you prayed about it? --J E Yoder

Give Him each perplexing problem,

All your needs to Him make known;

Bring to Him your daily burdens--

Never carry them alone! --Adams

A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Fretting Is A Waste

Fret (derived from an Old English word *fretan* meaning "to eat") means to affect something as if by gnawing or biting, to cause to suffer emotional strain, to become vexed or worried, (of a road surface) to become loose so that potholes develop (think about that definition as a word picture of what happens to the one who frets and worries); a state of irritation or anxiety. To corrode, rub, chafe, fray, vex, agitate, ripple, grate, stew, fume, brood, eat one's heart out, agonize, anguish, lose sleep over, obsess about, upset or distress oneself, worry, erode, gall, wear, wear away, annoy, bother, disturb, chagrin, goad, grieve, harass, irk, irritate, nag, nettle, provoke, rankle with, rile, ruffle, torment, trouble. Whew!!!

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret, it leads only to evil-doing." (Ps 37:8)

The older we get, the shorter life seems. Author Victor Hugo said, "Short as life is, we make it still shorter by the careless waste of time." There's no sadder example of wasted time than a life dominated by fretting. Take, for example, an American woman whose dream of riding a train through the English countryside came true. After boarding the train she kept fretting about the windows and the temperature, complaining about her seat assignment, rearranging her luggage, and so on. To her shock, she suddenly reached her journey's end. With deep regret she said to the person meeting her, "If I'd known I was going to arrive so soon, I wouldn't have wasted my time fretting so much." It's easy to get sidetracked by problems that won't matter at life's end—difficult neighbors, a tight budget, signs of aging, people who are wealthier than you. Moses acknowledged the brevity of life and prayed, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Instead of fretting, feed on God's Word and apply it to yourself. Strive to grow in God's wisdom every day. Stay focused on eternal values. Make it your goal to greet your waiting Savior one day with a heart of wisdom, rather than a heart of care. —Joanie Yoder

Day by day and with each passing moment,

Strength I find to meet my trials here;

Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,

I've no cause for worry or for fear. —Berg

Worry casts a big shadow behind a small thing.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

FAITH OR FEAR — WHICH?

Be anxious for nothing. Philippians 4:6

Worry is merely unbelief parading in disguise! The Scriptures repeatedly warn us against this grievous sin. Ian Maclaren ex-claims, "What does your anxiety do? It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but it does empty today of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil; it makes you unfit to cope with it when it comes. God gives us the power to bear all the sorrow of His making, but He does not guarantee to give us strength to bear the burdens of our own making such as worry induces."

An experienced physician decided to analyze the "worriers" who were his patients. He found that 40 percent of them were apprehensive over things that never happened. About 30 per-cent concerned themselves with past matters now beyond their control. Another 12 percent anxiously feared the loss of their health, although their only illness was in their imagination. And the rest worried about their families, friends, and neighbors, but in most cases he discovered no basis for their fears.

A bassoon player once came to the great conductor Toscanini with furrowed brow and complained that his instrument would not sound the high E flat. Toscanini smiled and replied, "Don't worry. There is no E flat in your music tonight." The musician had been needlessly apprehensive. Many of our worries are like that — unfounded and unnecessary.

Worry is both unprofitable and ungodly. God's grace will be sufficient for each day's need. Take comfort in this thought, and tread the pathway of life with faith, not fear!

I walked life's path with "Worry,"

Disturbed and quite unblessed,

Until I trusted Jesus;

Now "Faith" has given rest. — G.W.

Satan seeks to crush our spirit by getting us to bear tomorrow's burdens with only today's grace!

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Source Of Hope

READ: Lamentations 3:19-41

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. —Lamentations 3:22

What good is faith when all seems lost? I've asked that penetrating question in my life, and not long ago I received a letter from a mom who has asked it as well.

She told me that she and her husband set out in their marriage to seek God's will for their lives and entrust their future to Him. Then their second son was born with Down syndrome. Their initial response was "grief, shock, and disbelief." Yet the same day he was born, God used Philippians 4:6-7 to put peace in their hearts and give them an undying love for their precious son. It says: "Let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts."

But their days in the desert were not over. Nine years later, their fourth son was diagnosed with cancer. Before he reached his third birthday, he was gone. Shock, pain, and sadness again broke into their world. And again, they found help from God and His Word. "When the grief overwhelms us," says this mom, "we turn to God's Word and His gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ."

When life's troubles hit us like a tidal wave, we can remember that God's compassions never fail (Lamentations 3:22). He can give us the hope we need. —Dave Branon

My sheep I know, they are My own,

I leave them not in trials alone;

I will be with them to the end—

Their hope, their joy, their dearest Friend. —Anon.

Feeling hopeless reminds us that we are helpless without God.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Jesus' Very Own Peace

READ: Matthew 16:21-23

My peace I give you. —John 14:27

On the eve of the execution of Christian martyr Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555), his brother offered to stay with him in the prison to be of comfort. Ridley declined, saying that he planned to sleep as soundly as usual. Because he knew the peace of Jesus, he could rest in his Lord.

The next morning, Ridley told a fellow Christian who was also being executed, "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it." Then they knelt and prayed by the stake and, after a brief conversation, were burned to death for their faith.

Jesus had given Nicholas Ridley His peace (John 14:27). But what kind of peace did Jesus have? In Matthew 16:21-23, we see His peace in His determination to go to Jerusalem even though He knew He would suffer and die (see Luke 9:51). Peter rebuked Him, but Jesus trusted His Father and went to the cross. His purpose for living was to die.

Amy Carmichael said, "The peace of Jesus stood every sort of test, every strain, and it never broke. It is this, His very own peace, which He says 'I give.'"

No matter how big or small our trials may be, we can trust Jesus to give us His very own peace in the midst of them. —Anne Cetas

For Further Thought

How can we be at peace with God? (Romans 5:1-2).

How do we find peace in our trials? (Philippians 4:6-7).

Have you experienced Jesus' peace?

When Jesus rules the heart, peace reigns.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... Colossians 3:15

The story is told about a wounded soldier who was being taken to a hospital tent by some of his comrades. After they had carried him but a short distance, he urged them to put him down and go back to rescue someone else. As he was mortally wounded, he knew there was no hope for him anyway. Granting his request, they left him and returned to the combat area. In a few minutes, however, an officer stopped to ask him whether he could assist him in any way. The wounded soldier weakly replied, "No, thank you, sir. There's nothing at all you can do." "But can't I at least get some water to quench your thirst?" the officer inquired. The dying man again shook his head saying, "No, thank you, sir. There is one thing, however, you could do for me. In my knapsack you will find a New Testament. Please open it to John 14. Near the end of the chapter you will find a text beginning with the word 'Peace.' I would appreciate it if you would read just that one verse to me." The officer found the passage and read these words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). "Thank you, sir," said the dying soldier. "I have that peace and I am going to the Savior who made that promise. God is with me, I want no more." Shortly after that, the wounded man entered into the presence of his Lord. Because he had Christ, he had peace with God, and since he had learned to commit everything to His care, he also had the peace of God. How important for all of us to remember that the Bible admonishes, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks-giving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God . shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!" (Phil. 4:6, 7). Yes, in our joys and in our sorrows, in life's sunshine, or in the "valley of the shadow," we who are at peace with God can also know the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging 'round?

On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.—E. H. Bickersteth

Peace rules the day when Christ rules the heart!

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

THE FORTRESS OF THE HEART

"Keep thy heart with all diligence."—Pro 4:23.

"The peace of God shall keep your hearts."—Phil 4:7.

IN MOST of the old castles there is an inner keep, which is protected, not only by mighty walls and bastions, but by the portcullis at the gate, and sentries at every approach, who challenged every one that passed in and out. So the heart is continually approached by good and evil, by the frivolities and vanities of the world and the insidious suggestions of the flesh. It is like an inn or hostelry, with constant arrivals and departures. Passengers throng in and out, some of them with evil intent, hoping to find conspirators, or to light fires that will spread until the whole being is swept with passion, consuming in an hour the fabric of years to ashes.

We need, therefore, to be constantly on the watch; we must keep our heart above all else that we guard, for out of it are the issues of life (R.V. marg.). Our Lord says that "out of the heart of man come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts," etc. The devil

and the world without would be less to be feared, if there were not such strong tendencies to evil within--many of them inherited from long lines of ancestors, who, alas! pass down to us the worst features of their characters equally with the best.

Keep it Clean. Just as the eye of the body is perpetually washed with tear-water, so let us ask that the precious blood of Christ may cleanse away any speck of impurity. Remember how delicate a thing the heart is, and how susceptible to the dust of an evil thought, which would instantly prevent it becoming the organ of spiritual vision. Sursum Corda! Lift up your hearts! We lift them up unto the Lord!

The Sentinel of Peace. Then the Peace of God will become the warden or sentry of the heart, and it passeth understanding! We can understand the apparent peace of some men. They have made money, and their gold-bags are piled around them as a fortress; they have rich and influential friends, within whose protection they imagine they will be sheltered and defended; they enjoy good health, and are held in high esteem. We can understand such peace, though it often proves ephemeral! But there is a peace that passeth understanding! It is to this that our Lord refers when He says, "My Peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

PRAYER- Keep me, Heavenly Father, as the apple of Thine eye; defend me by Thine Almighty power; hide me from this strife of tongues and the fiery darts of the wicked one. May my heart be as the palace which the Stronger than the strong man keeps in perfect peace. AMEN.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

A Powerful Lesson

Read: Ephesians 1:15-21

Whatever things are of good report, ... meditate on these things. —Philippians 4:8

In 1892, John Hyde boarded a ship in New York harbor and set out for India. His goal was to proclaim the gospel to people who had not heard about Jesus. During the next 20 years he earned the nickname "Praying Hyde" because he often spent hours and even many days in prayer for the salvation of nonbelievers and the revival of Christ's followers.

On one occasion, Hyde was upset about the spiritual coldness of a pastor, so he began to pray, "O Father, you know how cold—" But it was as if a finger stopped his lips from uttering the man's name.

Hyde was horrified when he realized that he had judged the man harshly. He confessed his critical spirit and then determined not to focus on the shortcomings of others but to see them as individuals whom God loves. Hyde asked the Lord to show him things that were "of good report" (Philippians 4:8) in the pastor's life, and he praised God for the man's virtues. Hyde learned later that during this exact time the pastor's spiritual life was revitalized.

Let's not be faultfinders—even in prayer. We can follow Paul's example of focusing on what God has done and what He can do in the lives of others (Ephesians 1:17-21). Instead of praying against people, let's pray for them. —J E Yoder

Prayer -Father, give me the wisdom to know how to pray for others—with kindness, not criticism; with love, not anger; with grace, not judgment.

Be a grace-giver, not a faultfinder

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

The best way to keep evil ideas out of our minds is to concentrate on things that are good and pure and beautiful. The mind cannot be entirely at rest; it is not a blank. Hence the exhortation is given to think about right things. We are to be occupied with the Scriptures, with loving attitudes and holy desires. We must look only on worthy things and meditate primarily on that which is of good report. To praise rather than to criticize is our first duty. As we thus allow the Holy Spirit to bring every thought into captivity to Christ, we will find that good deeds will automatically flow from such lofty and spiritual attitudes. Like our blessed Savior, we too will then go about "doing good" (Acts 10:38).

A college girl who was a fine scholar and had a noble spirit volunteered to be a counselor at a girl's camp. Despite her abilities, she was required to peel potatoes in the kitchen. The head mistress of the camp, realizing that this was quite a menial task for such a talented and highly intellectual girl, exclaimed, "It's too bad that a young woman of your education should have to peel potatoes." The girl who was a splendid Christian looked up brightly and replied, "But, Miss Baldwin, remember, I don't have to think about potatoes while I'm peeling them." The application is obvious. You can keep your soul out of the dust no matter what your task, if you

center your thoughts on the things mentioned in our text. Let the Holy Spirit discipline your mind by dismissing suspicion and replacing it with hope and trust. Forego grudges. Flout envy. Be appreciative, be kind, be gentle. Rejoice in the Lord a little more. Take pleasure in beauty and virtue. Clear away the cobwebs of doubt, frustration, and anger. Let your mind dwell on Christ and He will beautify your life.

Think truly, and thy thoughts

Shall be a fruitful seed;

Live truly, and thy life shall be

A great and noble creed. — H. Bonar

You're not what you think you are; but what you THINK—you are!

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

THINK TOGETHER

If there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. —Philippians 4:8

An executive of the world's largest toymaker said, "We are such a machine in terms of what we deliver on an annual basis that it doesn't allow time to think."

In an effort to stimulate creativity, this company is taking selected employees out of corporate headquarters and encouraging them to think together in new ways. For instance, when asked to devise a method to prevent an egg from breaking if dropped from 14 feet, one group went beyond the conventional approach of trying to cushion its fall and created an egg bungee cord.

What about us? Are our lives so focused on activity and production that we don't take time to think? In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he told them to meditate on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (4:8). What would happen if we began this kind of thinking together in our churches and homes? Might we discover creative, God-given approaches to problems that seem to defy solution? Would our perspective on life undergo a radical change?

"Meditate on these things" is a great command. Obeying it with our families and other believers could open doors of discovery for helping others, serving God, and living for Him. Now that's something to think about! —David C. McCasland

Lord, help us to think of the right and the true,

The pure and the noble—it all points to You;

For if we consider what's worthy of praise,

We'll then want to live for You all of our days. —Fitzhugh

Right thinking leads to right living

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

WHILE driving, I sometimes see vultures soaring high overhead, swooping down, and then rising up again with the air currents. Every so often, I see a small group of them sitting on the roadway tearing apart the carcass of some unfortunate creature. These ugly birds are on the lookout continually for what is loathsome and repulsive!

Some people are like that. Nothing seems to satisfy them more than what is sinful, corrupt, and immoral. The books and magazines they read, the TV programs they watch, the conversations they engage in, and the activities they pursue reveal a vulture-like appetite.

How much better is the spiritual diet the Bible suggests: "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" (Philippians 4:8).

What kind of food do you prefer? Don't be like the vulture. Rather, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).—R W De Haan

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

PASTORS, public speakers, and writers do a lot of listening and reading to find information, illustrations, and better ways of

expressing truth. I listen to radio talk shows while driving, and I have a book or magazine in hand while watching a ball game on television.

What happens with all this input? My mind processes it, and it becomes a part of me. Then when I write or speak, it comes out in my own words.

This process of absorbing words and ideas is not unique to speakers and authors. Everyone takes in vast amounts of information every day. And living as we do in a world system with god-less values, we are bound to take in a lot of garbage. What we can't avoid we need to reject before it becomes a part of the way we think. If we fail to be discerning, our minds will be defiled. But if we find pleasure in what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8), these good qualities will become a part of the way we think, act, and speak.

We can't avoid hearing bad thoughts and ideas, but if we process them through God's filter of truth, we can turn them around and use them for good.—FM

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

ANYTHING that dims my vision of Christ or takes away my taste for Bible study or cramps my prayer life or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it," said J. Wilbur Chapman.

The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, summed it up this way: "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" (Philippians 4:8).

With those things filling our minds and with the Holy Spirit leading us, we can develop guidelines for living that will honor God. Doing so will liberate us from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Then, no matter what trials and temptations may threaten us, we will have a standard to live by.

The Christian life is not a collection of do's and don'ts; it is a daily walk that is guided by the Holy Spirit who indwells us. He can help us establish self-control and give us direction through the principles in Scripture. With His help, we can set good standards for our behavior.—PRV

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Cafeteria Christianity

Read: Mark 8:34-38

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. --Mark 8:34

In his book *Thinking in the Future Tense*, Edward B. Lindaman refers to "the cafeteria culture of our age." It's the tendency to shy away from life's unpleasant disciplines and seek only what brings immediate pleasure.

Christians are not exempt from this tendency. Some persuasive preachers promote an "abundant life" of success and prosperity through positive thinking, more faith, or giving money to get God's blessing in return.

The Bible, of course, teaches us to think positively (Phil. 4:8) and to give liberally (2 Cor. 8:2). But much "prosperity preaching" lacks the nourishing truths of Christ's sacrifice for sin and His demand for godly living. Our God is not only loving, good, and generous; He is also righteous, holy, and demanding. He hates sin and will not compromise with evil.

It's wonderful to hear about the blessings Christ offers, but we also need to experience repentance and self-denial. The picking and choosing of a cafeteria-style Christianity is no substitute for a well-rounded diet, which includes the tough truths of taking up Christ's cross and following Him (Mark 8:34). That kind of nourishment stimulates the growth of spiritual muscle and Christlike character. And I need all of that I can get, don't you? --D J De Haan

From subtle love of softening things,

From easy choices, weakenings;

Not thus are spirits fortified,

Not this way went the Crucified. --Carmichael

To be conformed to Christ, let God's Spirit form Christ in you.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

An office supervisor instructed her secretary to alter some question-able financial records. When the secretary refused, the supervisor asked, "Don't you ever lie?"

For many people, both public and private honesty is an obsolete virtue—a moral remnant of bygone days. Integrity is more complex than simply refusing to lie. Integrity means speaking out when remaining silent would convey the wrong impression, and it means doing what's best for others even if it causes us harm.

Sa'ad, a sensitive, hard-working man who lives in Zarayed, one of Cairo's garbage dumps, works long hours collecting trash. He is one of thousands of Egypt's garbage collectors who struggle to survive, but who seldom break out of their hopeless prison of poverty. Often he clears little more than fifty cents a day. One day Sa'ad found a gold watch valued at nearly two thousand dollars. He could have sold the watch and made a better life for himself and his family. He could have reasoned that he needed it more than the owner or that it was God's justice that allowed him to find the watch. But he didn't. He returned the watch to its owner. Sa'ad is a Christian and believes it's wrong to keep what doesn't belong to him.

If this kind of honesty is not evident in our lives, we need to reexamine ourselves. Jesus is the Truth. Truthfulness, therefore, must be the way of life for all who follow Him. —D J De Haan

Some people are honest only because they have never had a good chance to steal anything.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

What's The Connection?

READ: Colossians 3:1-14

Whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, ... meditate on these things. —PHILIPPIANS 4:8

The image on the TV screen captures our attention and we sit down to watch. As we flip from channel to channel, is there any connection between what we decide to watch and what is in our heart? Does our faith in Christ have anything at all to do with our TV choices?

In a world of falling standards, we must think through this question: How does our relationship with Christ affect our TV viewing habits?

One secular writer speaking about today's television programs said, "The notion of indecency has become obsolete." He is suggesting that a standard has been pushed aside. What is that standard? I believe it's the moral standard found in biblical teaching.

Most TV productions are not governed by the guidelines God wants us to follow. The Bible tells us, "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" (Philippians 4:8). It's hard to do that when we're being bombarded by the ungodly images presented on television.

Let's ask God to help us make godly choices in what we watch on TV. —Dave Branon

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;

Sow an act, and you reap a habit;

Sow a habit, and you reap a character;

Sow a character, and you reap a destiny. —Anon.

Character is formed by making choices in one direction

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, ... think on these things -Philippians 4:8

Our society needs a good dose of old-fashioned honesty, particularly among its leaders. In business, in politics, in school, in the home, and even in the church, we are seeing less and less of this vital quality—especially in money matters. Under-the-table deals, unrecorded trans-actions, padded expense accounts, forgotten debts, and unpaid traffic fines are the order of the day. The rule seems to be, if you can get away with it, do it.

We need to recapture something of the spirit and moral character of the sixteenth President of the United States. Throughout Lincoln's professional life as a lawyer he always had a partner. Frequently, Abe would go out on a circuit to handle legal matters while his colleague stayed at home. When he completed a case, Lincoln often collected the fee before he returned to the office. He always divided the money in his billfold, carefully wrapping his partner's half in a piece of paper on which he wrote his name and the case for which it was received. In this way, if anything happened to him before turning over the money, no one could dispute the amount and for whom it was intended. This practice may seem trivial, but it was totally in keeping with the man we have come to know as "Honest Abe."

We all should make it our goal to live in such a way that the word honest sounds right in front of our name. —D J De Haan

Don't talk cream and live skim milk

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

THE GIFT OF THOUGHT

READ: Philippians 4:4-9

Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, ... meditate on these things. —Philippians 4:8

In some ways humans are inferior to animals. I have seen some incredibly strong men, but never one "as strong as an ox." Men can run 100 meters in under 10 seconds, but that doesn't begin to compare with the speed of a cheetah. There are people who have an uncanny sense of direction, but even they can't explain how migrating swallows can return unerringly to the same place year after year.

Yes, some animals are intelligent, but none of them can think as we can. No animal could ever have developed today's amazing society with all its medical and technological advances.

A human's unique ability to think enables him to have thoughts about God and eternity. The famous American poet Walt Whitman found this to be troubling. He said that he often envied the cattle that graze contentedly in a meadow, because they never worry or dwell on troublesome thoughts.

As Christians, we know that the ability to think is a God-given gift. But sad to say, we can misuse it by entertaining thoughts that are vulgar, foul, and mean. Paul told us to meditate on whatever is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, praiseworthy, and of good report (Philippians 4:8).

Lord, help us to discipline our thoughts. —Herbert Vander Lugt

Of all God's creatures only man

Can worship, meditate, and plan;

The gift of thought sets him apart

To love the Lord with all his heart. —D. De Haan

Godly character is shaped by godly thoughts.

PHILIPPIANS 4:9

Walking Our Faith

READ: Romans 2:17-24

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? —James 2:22

Often we Christians are urged not just to "talk the talk" but to "walk the talk." The same advice may be expressed in these words: Don't let your behavior contradict your professed belief. At other times we are admonished to be sure that life and lip agree. If our conduct doesn't harmonize with our confession of faith, however, that discrepancy nullifies the testimony of the gospel which we proclaim.

As far as we can know, Mahatma Gandhi never became a Christian, but he made a statement that we who follow Jesus would do well to ponder. When asked to put his message into one short sentence, he replied, "My life is my message."

Certainly we should explain the gospel message as clearly as possible. Yet the clearest explanation isn't going to win hearts for our

Lord unless His love is embodied in our lives. To quote the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." And holding himself up as a pattern, he wrote in Philippians 4:9, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

Pray, then, that like Paul we may live out our saving faith before the watching world.—Vernon C Grounds

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—

All His wonderful passion and purity!

O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,

Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. —Orsborn

The world is watching us—do they see Jesus?

PHILIPPIANS 4:9

FAITH'S CHECKBOOK - SPURGEON

TO OTHERS, AN "EXAMPLE"

IT is well when a man can with advantage be so minutely copied, as Paul might have been. Oh, for grace to imitate him this day and every day! Should we, through divine grace, carry into practice the Pauline teaching, we may claim the promise which is now open before us; and what a promise it is! God, who loves peace, makes peace, and breathes peace, will be with us. "Peace be with you" is a sweet benediction; but for the God of peace to be with us is far more. Thus we have the fountain as well as the streams, the sun as well as his beams. If the God of peace be with us, we shall enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding, even though outward circumstances should threaten to disturb. If men quarrel, we shall be sure to be peacemakers, if the Maker of peace be with us. It is in the way of truth that real peace is found. If we quit the faith or leave the path of righteousness under the notion of promoting peace, we shall be greatly mistaken. First pure, then peaceable, is the order of wisdom and of fact. Let us keep to Paul's line, and we shall have the God of peace with us as He was with the apostle.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-12

A GOOD SURRENDER

Godliness with contentment is great gain. --1 Timothy 6:6

Surrender is not a very popular word. We use it in reference to the humiliation that accompanies defeat. When a nation loses a war, it may be forced to surrender unconditionally, and has no say in the terms of defeat.

Yet there is a type of surrender that is dignified and appropriate. Paul understood it in two aspects. First, it means surrendering our desires and will to the heavenly Father. Jesus is our example, for He did the Father's will in everything (Jn. 6:38).

The second aspect is our acceptance of God's supreme sovereignty. This is marked by our realization that things do not always go our way as God works out His will on earth. Our business goes through good times and bad. Our health may suffer. Loved ones will hurt us, or leave us, or even die. Our fondest dreams may never be realized.

In the spiritual sense, to surrender means that we trust God to do what is best. It is, as Paul said, choosing to be content "in whatever state I am" (Phil. 4:11-12), and knowing by faith that God will take care of our needs (v.19). That kind of faith isn't easy. But it's the only way to overcome dissatisfaction and anger about uncontrollable circumstances.

Perhaps it's time to say "I surrender" to the Lord and to His perfect will and plan. --D C Egner

Take my love--my God, I pour

At Thy feet its treasure store;

Take myself--and I will be

Ever, only, all for Thee. --Havergal

Surrender is victory when we yield to God.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

A friend in Pennsylvania wrote, "One of my father's old cows gives good milk, but she sure can be dumb! She has a whole field in which to feed, yet no grass seems quite as tasty as those patches outside her own pasture. I often see her stretching her head through the fence, while right behind her is everything she needs—excellent grazing land, beautiful shade trees, a cool, refreshing stream of water, and even a big chunk of salt. What more could she want?"

Many people are like that old cow. They think the "grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." They are constantly grasping, coveting, and seeking to obtain what doesn't belong to them.

If you are a Christian, the greatest blessings in life are already yours. Heaven is your home, and God is your Father. He has promised never to leave you (Heb. 13:5), and He will supply your every need (Phil. 4:19). How green the grass is on your side of the fence! —R. W. D.

MOST PEOPLE AREN'T CONTENT WITH THEIR LOT --EVEN WHEN THEY GET A LOT MORE.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

GODLY CONTENTMENT

Contentment is never the result of multiplying riches, increasing pleasures, or gaining fame. All these only incite discontent, for when one obtains them, he finds he still is not satisfied. Contentment does not depend upon things on the outside, but results from conditions on the inside! Paul had suffered more for the sake of Christ than probably anyone else (2 Cor. 11:23-28); yet this is the man who says, "I am content." The apostle was able to interpret all the experiences of life in terms of God's will for his eternal good (Rom. 8:28). Paul did not come to this happy philosophy of life in a moment. He says, "I have learned ... to be content." Aspiring to be what we are not, or grasping after riches which elude us, is not the way to happiness. We must rather do our very best with God's help to accomplish our life's task with the talents and opportunities He presents.

In his famous lecture on "Clocks and Watches," Dr. Joseph Parker related the following story: A little watch, delicately strung, was dissatisfied with its restricted sphere of influence in a lady's pocket. It envied the position of Big Ben, the great tower clock. One day as it passed with her ladyship over London's Westminster Bridge, the tiny watch exclaimed, "I wish I could go up there! I could then serve multitudes, instead of just one individual." "You shall have your opportunity, small watch," she said. The lecturer then dramatically described how the pocket timepiece was drawn up the side of the mammoth tower by a slender thread. When it reached the top, it was completely lost to view. In his dramatic way, Dr. Parker concluded his lecture by exclaiming, "Its elevation had become its annihilation!"

Pray that you too may not lose the small influence you now have for Christ by coveting something larger for which you are not equipped, and which God constantly refuses you in His love.

O for the peace of perfect trust

My loving God in Thee;

Unwavering faith that never doubts

Thou chooseth best for me. —Anon.

Discontent makes rich men poor, while contentment makes poor men rich

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

SPURGEON - MORNING AND EVENING

These words show us that contentment is not a natural propensity of man. "Ill weeds grow apace." Covetousness, discontent, and murmuring are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil. We need not sow thistles and brambles; they come up naturally enough, because they are indigenous to earth: and so, we need not teach men to complain; they complain fast enough without any education. But the precious things of the earth must be cultivated. If we would have wheat, we must plough and sow; if we want flowers, there must be the garden, and all the gardener's care. Now, contentment is one of the flowers of heaven, and if we would have it, it must be cultivated; it will not grow in us by nature; it is the new nature alone that can produce it, and even then we must be specially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate the grace which God has sown in us. Paul says, "I have learned ... to be content;" as much as to say, he did not know how at one time. It cost him some pains to attain to the mystery of that great truth. No doubt he sometimes thought he had learned, and then broke down. And when at last he had attained unto it, and could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," he was an old, grey-headed man, upon the borders of the grave—a poor prisoner shut up in Nero's dungeon at Rome. We might well be willing to endure Paul's infirmities, and share the cold dungeon with him, if we too might by any means attain unto his good degree. Do not indulge the notion that you can be contented with learning, or

learn without discipline. It is not a power that may be exercised naturally, but a science to be acquired gradually. We know this from experience. Brother, hush that murmur, natural though it be, and continue a diligent pupil in the College of Content.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

BAD AND GOOD OF POVERTY

The young man I visited in jail had been arrested for armed robbery. He was bitter as he spoke of the inner-city school from which he had dropped out because he felt unsafe. He asked, "Why couldn't I have gone to a better school? Why didn't someone help me to learn a trade?" He said he committed the robbery because he was sick and tired of having so little while others had so much.

I felt sorry for him. Poverty has a down side. It can place people in a position where they are tempted to commit crimes.

Like the writer of Proverbs 30, I would never ask God to send me poverty. Yet Jesus said, "Blessed are you poor" (Luke 6:20).

I grew up in the 1930s during the Great Depression. My family seldom ate meat, and we wore second hand clothing. Yet we were happy. We were supremely thankful for small favors. We enjoyed simple pleasures. We appreciated one another. We valued our spiritual riches.

I'm not saying that we should desire poverty, but we can be hankful for it. We can learn lessons through it that we could earn in no other way. Let's be like the apostle Paul who said that he had learned to be content, no matter what his situation (Phil. 4:11). -- Herbert Vander Lugt

Lord, help me not to set my heart

On things that pass away;

Make me content with what I have

And help me stay that way. --Sper

Those who are content are never poor; those who are discontent are never rich.

PHILIPPIANS 4:12

SPURGEON - MORNING AND EVENING

There are many who know "how to be abased" who have not learned "how to abound." When they are set upon the top of a pinnacle their heads grow dizzy, and they are ready to fall. The Christian far oftener disgraces his profession in prosperity than in adversity. It is a dangerous thing to be prosperous. The crucible of adversity is a less severe trial to the Christian than the refining pot of prosperity. Oh, what leanness of soul and neglect of spiritual things have been brought on through the very mercies and bounties of God! Yet this is not a matter of necessity, for the apostle tells us that he knew how to abound. When he had much he knew how to use it. Abundant grace enabled him to bear abundant prosperity. When he had a full sail he was loaded with much ballast, and so floated safely. It needs more than human skill to carry the brimming cup of mortal joy with a steady hand, yet Paul had learned that skill, for he declares, "In all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry." It is a divine lesson to know how to be full, for the Israelites were full once, but while the flesh was yet in their mouth, the wrath of God came upon them. Many have asked for mercies that they might satisfy their own hearts' lust. Fulness of bread has often made fulness of blood, and that has brought on wantonness of spirit. When we have much of God's providential mercies, it often happens that we have but little of God's grace, and little gratitude for the bounties we have received. We are full and we forget God: satisfied with earth, we are content to do without heaven. Rest assured it is harder to know how to be full than it is to know how to be hungry—so desperate is the tendency of human nature to pride and forgetfulness of God. Take care that you ask in your prayers that God would teach you "how to be full."

"Let not the gifts thy love bestows

Estrange our hearts from thee."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

LIGHTEN THE LOAD

I once read about a distraught Christian woman who was extremely upset because her children had become unruly. She telephoned her husband at work one day and tearfully described the visit of a friend who had pinned this verse above the kitchen sink: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). The friend had meant well. She was trying to be helpful, but her action just made the mom feel even more like a failure.

Sometimes it's not helpful merely to quote a Scripture verse to someone. Philippians 4:13 was Paul's personal testimony that he had learned to be content in all situations, in plenty and in want (vv.11-12). His secret of contentment was that he could "do all things through Christ" who strengthened him (v.13).

We too can live by Paul's secret. We can be victorious through Christ's strength, but we shouldn't force this truth on people who are feeling overwhelmed. Paul also wrote that we should care for one another and share in one another's distress (Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:4; 4:14).

We need each other, for we all have burdens to bear. Let's use the strength Christ gives us to minister to the needs of others and find ways to lighten their loads. —Joanie Yoder

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Who needs your encouragement today?

What are some practical ways you can help?

Write a note? Make a meal? Babysit? Just listen?

To ease another's burden, help to carry it.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

You Can Do It!

READ: Romans 7:15-25

A young boy was at the barbershop for a haircut. The room was filled with cigar smoke. The lad pinched his nose and exclaimed, "Who's been smoking in here!" The barber sheepishly confessed, "I have." The boy responded, "Don't you know it's not good for you?" "I know," the barber replied. "I've tried to quit a thousand times but I just can't." The boy commented, "I understand. I've tried to stop sucking my thumb, but I can't quit either!"

Those two remind me of the way believers sometimes feel about their struggle with sins of the flesh. Paul summed it up well by crying out, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). His spiritual battle might have left him in despair if he had not found the solution. Following his agonizing question, he declared with triumph, "I thank God- through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v.25).

Are you struggling to break some stubborn habit? Like Paul, you can be an overcomer. If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, victory is possible through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Confidently affirm with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). You can do it! —Richard De Haan

I have tried and I have struggled

From my sin to be set free;

Not by trying but through trusting,

Jesus gives the victory. -Complin

Think less of the power of things over you and more of the power of Christ in you.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Jerry Bridges defines contentment as believing that God is good to me right now (The Practice of Godliness). After I spoke on this topic at a church, I heard these comments:

"It's hard for me to be content right now because I am married to an unsaved man. I keep thinking that I can't be content as long as he's not a believer. But I see that God is calling for me to be content right now."

Another woman rose and said,

"I'm a single mother rearing two boys by myself. I see how much they need a father, and it makes me unhappy with God. Pray that I will do better at accepting this as God's will for me right now."

Then a man stood to say,

"I want a promotion at work and our family needs the extra money. I have to admit I've really been complaining about it. I need prayer to accept this as God's goodness for me."

One very strong temptation is to make people around us miserable because we don't think God's goodness for us is good enough. Whenever we give in to this temptation, we can repent by practicing the godliness of contentment. To do this we can begin passing on to others the goodness God has given us rather than burdening them with complaints about what He hasn't given us.—D C Egener

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Strength For Today

READ: Philippians 4:8-13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. —Philippians 4:13

Most people own a calendar or an appointment book in which they record details of future commitments. A Christian friend of mine uses one in the opposite way. He doesn't record key activities until after they've taken place.

Here's his approach: Each morning he prays, "Lord, I go forth in Your strength alone. Please use me as You wish." Then, whenever he accomplishes something unusual or difficult, he records it in his diary in the evening.

For example, he may write, "Today I was enabled to share my testimony with a friend." "Today God enabled me to overcome my fear through faith." "Today I was enabled to help and encourage a troubled person."

My friend uses the word enabled because he knows he couldn't do these things without God's help. By recording each "enabling," he is giving God all the glory. Relying constantly on God's strength, he can testify with the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

As you enter each new day, ask God to strengthen and use you. You can be sure that as you look back on your day, you'll praise and glorify the Lord as you realize what He has enabled you to do.—Joanie Yoder

Lord, give me strength for this day's task,

Not for tomorrow would I ask;

At twilight hour, oh, may I say,

"The Lord has been my guide today." —Nillingham

God always gives enough strength for the next step.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

CHOOSE YOUR COLOR

A college student decided one summer that he would earn money for his tuition by selling Bibles door-to-door. He began at the home of the school president. The president's wife came to the door and explained politely that her family didn't need any more books. As the student walked away, she saw him limping. "Oh, I'm sorry," she exclaimed. "I didn't know you were disabled."

When the student turned around, she realized she had offended him. So she quickly added, "I didn't mean anything except admiration. But doesn't your disability color your life?" To which the student responded, "Yes, it does. But thank God, I can choose the color."

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi and their backs were raw from beatings, they sang hymns (Acts 16:23-25). They chose the bright color of praise instead of the dark colors of depression,

bitterness, and despair.

No matter what affliction or crisis we may face, we too can decide how we will respond. With the enablement of the Holy Spirit, we can refuse to paint our lives in the dull gray of grumbling and complaining. Instead, our chosen color can be the azure blue of contentment because God's help is always available. -- Vernon C. Grounds

He gives me joy in place of sorrow;

He gives me love that casts out fear;

He gives me sunshine for my shadow,

And "beauty for ashes" here.-- Crabbe

God chooses what we go through; we choose how we go through it.

PHILIPPIANS 4:18

A NOTE OF THANKS

I was rummaging through some old files the other day when I ran across a big envelope full of treasures -- a collection of thank-you notes from my students during the last year I taught in high school. They brought back some cherished memories.

Reading them reminded me of the importance of letting people know how much they are appreciated.

Thank-you notes afford us the opportunity to make permanent our feelings of gratitude for our friends or loved ones.

The apostle Paul sent a thank-you note to the Christians in Philippi. They were the only church that had supported him financially on his missions trip (Phil. 4:15), and he wanted to say thanks. But he did more. He told the people specifically what good they had done by helping him. Through Paul, the people reached out to places they could never visit. They met Paul's necessities (v. 16). Their gifts bore spiritual fruit (v. 27). They pleased God (v. 18). And they received the promise of God's provision for them (v. 19).

Thank-you notes work both ways. They help the sender to express appreciation, and they help the recipient to know what he has done to assist. It's a great combination.

Does someone you know deserve a note of thanks? -- J. David Branon

Consider what the Lord has done

Through those who've shown you love;

Then thank them for their faithful deeds,

For blessings from above. -- Sper

A word of encouragement can make the difference between giving up and going on.

PHILIPPIANS 4:18

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

RICH TOWARD GOD

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."-- Luke 12:15.

"I have all, and abound."-- Phil4:18.

LET US never forget this wonderful assertion, that life consists not in what we possess, but in what we are; not in goods, but in goodness; not in things, but qualities. "How much was he worth?" we ask when a man dies, and we expect an answer in the amount that stood to his credit, and on which his estate must pay death duties. Yet surely a man is worth only the love, humility, generosity, and sweet reasonableness which characterize him. Take away some people's wealth, and, as in the case of the rich man of whom our Lord speaks in His parable, you have nothing left; but take away all things from St. John or St. Paul, from St. Francis or Augustine, or Wesley, and you have an abundance left which makes them the millionaires of all time! "Poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The rich man in the parable made three foolish mistakes. First, he treated his wealth as though it were absolutely his own. There is no suggestion that he had made it wrongfully. His wealth had evidently accrued as the gift of prolific harvests, and was certainly due to the goodness of the Creator, on whose co-operation the results of husbandry evidently depend. But to lift up grateful eyes in thankful acknowledgment to God seems never to have occurred to him! Are we not all too prone to magnify our own shrewdness and aptitude, and to exclude God when we make up our accounts for the year.

Second, he thought that the best receptacle for his overplus was in barns, and forgot that there were multitudes of poor and needy souls around. When we begin to accumulate more than we need for our use, or the provision for our families, we should consider, not further investments, but the pressing need of others.

Third, he thought that goods could stay the hunger of the soul. How often has the heart of man or woman been surfeited with goods and remained unsatisfied? Let us give, expecting nothing again, with full measure, pressed down, and running over; give, not only money, but love and tenderness and human sympathy; give as one who is always receiving from the boundless resources of God.

PRAYER

Help us, O God, to set our affections on things above, not on things on earth, for nothing beneath these skies can satisfy the hearts which Thou hast made for Thyself. AMEN.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Winds Of Love

READ: 1 John 4:1-8

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. —1 John 4:8

A farmer had a weather vane on his barn, on which was written "God is love." When friends asked why, the farmer said, "This is to remind me that no matter which way the wind blows, God is love."

When the warm "south wind" with its soothing and balmy breezes brings showers of blessing, God is love. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17).

When the cold "north wind" of trial and testing sweeps down upon you, God is love. "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

When the "west wind" blows hard upon you with its punishing intent, God is love. "Whom the Lord loves He chastens" (Hebrews 12:6).

When the "east wind" threatens to sweep away all that you have, God is love. "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19).

Perhaps you are discouraged and downhearted. If so, remember, God still cares for you. What you are experiencing has either been sent or it has been allowed by Him for your good.

Yes, no matter which way the wind is blowing, God is love. —Richard De Haan

God is love: His mercy brightens

All the path in which we rove;

Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens—

God is wisdom, God is love. —Bowring

No affliction would trouble us if we knew God's reason for permitting it.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

FAITH'S CHECKBOOK – SPURGEON

Limitless Riches

PAUL'S God is our God, and He will supply all our need. Paul felt sure of this in reference to the Philippians, and we feel sure of it as to ourselves. God will do it, for it is like Him: He loves us, He delights to bless us, and it will glorify Him to do so. His pity, His power, His love, His faithfulness, all work together that we be not famished. What a measure doth the Lord go by: "According to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The riches of His grace are large, but what shall we say of the riches of His glory? His "riches of glory by Christ Jesus," who shall form an estimate of this? According to this immeasurable measure will God fill up the immense abyss of our necessities. He makes the Lord Jesus the receptacle and the channel of His fullness, and then He imparts to us His wealth of love in its highest form. Hallelujah! The writer knows what it is to be tried in the work of the Lord. Fidelity has been recompensed with anger, and liberal givers have stopped their subscriptions. But he whom they sought to oppress has not been one penny the poorer; nay,

rather he has been the richer, for this promise has been true, "My God shall supply all our need." God's supplies are surer than any bank.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Faith & Riches

READ: Ephesians 1

... that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance. —Ephesians 1:18

Do you want to be rich? Do you think your faith will bring you riches? What kind of riches are you looking for?

There's good news and bad news if wealth is what you want. The good news is that God's Word does promise riches to the believer. The "bad" news is that it doesn't have anything to do with money.

Here are some examples of the riches that can be ours as believers in Jesus Christ:

An understanding of God the Father and the Son, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2-3).

Christ, "the hope of glory," living in us (Colossians 1:27).

Mighty strength in our inner being, "through His Spirit" (Ephesians 3:16).

Having all our needs met by God (Philippians 4:19).

The "wisdom and knowledge of God" (Romans 11:33).

"Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins," which comes from God's grace (Ephesians 1:7).

Yes, God's Word promises us great riches—treasures that we cannot even attempt to purchase with any amount of money. It is these riches that we must seek, enjoy, and use to glorify their source—our heavenly Father.—Dave Branon

The treasures of earth are not mine,

I hold not its silver and gold;

But a treasure far greater is mine;

I have riches of value untold. —Hartzler

God's Word promises riches that money cannot buy.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

"WHEN THIS GETS ALL"

We had thoroughly enjoyed the meeting in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and the privilege of greeting many friends of the Radio Bible Class who attended the service that evening. Some dear friends invited us to their home after the meeting for a lunch; but when we got there, it was more like a full-course dinner, and what a feast we had! As we were eating, one of the hostesses came into the living room to see if we had enough. Upon leaving, she turned around and said, "There's more in the kitchen when this gets all!" Since I come from the Midwest, this Pennsylvania Dutch expression really tickled me. "There's more in the kitchen when this gets all!" It was just another way of saying, "When what you have is all gone, there's more where that came from!" That was good to know, but how much more wonderful this is in the spiritual realm. How comforting the assurance that no matter how great our need, no matter how heavily we might have already drawn upon Heaven's resources, there's more "when this gets all!"

God's love has no measure; God's grace has no limit; and God's power is supreme. His wisdom is unbounded; and, praise His name, His provisions are never exhausted! No wonder the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus expressing his desire that they might "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" and be conscious of the fact that He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

Oh, that we might learn to walk in this confidence each day, and never worry about tomorrow! Thanking God for His present provision, we should go forward a step at a time knowing that "there's more when this gets all!"

"There's more, there's more, when this gets all";

Assurance blest: He hears our call,

Though sad our way — filled with regret —

Through His supply we'll conquer yet! —H. G. Bosch

Our prayer and God's supply are like two buckets in a well; while one ascends, the other descends!

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

The Ultimate Giver

Read: Psalm 146

Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. --Ps. 146:3

If we put our trust for our well-being in a person, any person, we are putting it in the wrong place. Ultimately, our faith must be in God. To transfer that trust to a spouse or pastor or child is to put it where we will be disappointed.

In his book *The Business of Heaven*, C. S. Lewis wrote, "At first it is natural for a baby to take its mother's milk without knowing its mother. It is equally natural for us to see the man who helps us without seeing Christ behind him. But we must not remain babies. We must go on to recognize the real Giver. It is madness not to. Because, if we do not, we shall be relying on human beings. And that is going to let us down. The best of them will make mistakes; all of them will die. We must be thankful to all the people who helped us. We must honor and love them. But never, never pin your whole faith on any human being."

The author of Psalm 146 said not to trust in mortal men--even princes (v.3). Instead, he wrote, "Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (v.5).

God can be trusted because He always provides what He promises. He is the ultimate Giver. --D C Egner

I belong to the King, and He loves me, I know,

For His mercy and kindness, so free,

Are unceasingly mine wheresoever I go,

And my refuge unailing is He. --Smith

My God shall supply all your need. --Philippians 4:19

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Pastor Harold Springstead was driving along, on his way to preach at a little country church, when he felt a sudden vibration. A tire had gone flat. As the 78-year-old pastor maneuvered his car to a stop, a trucker pulled up behind him. A young man jumped out, assessed the situation, and cheerfully changed the tire. Pastor Springstead got to the service in plenty of time, and it was not until later that he realized his car didn't even have a jack!

It was a minor problem. He was a retired faithful servant of God. It was a tiny congregation. We might think God would be too busy with larger and more important needs than to be concerned about a flat tire. But His promise to provide for the needs of His people covers little things as well as big ones.

The same God who helped Elisha retrieve the borrowed ax head (2 Ki. 6:5-7), who supplied food for a faithful widow (1 Ki. 17:8-16), and who provided wine at a small-town wedding (Jn. 2:1-10) meets our needs as well.

Think back over the past few days. Has the Lord taken care of some minor needs in your life? Has He solved some nagging problem? Thank Him! As today unfolds, remember that He provides the little things too. --D C Egner

If God sees the sparrow's fall,

Paints the lilies, short and tall,

Gives the skies their azure hue,

Will He not then care for you? --Anon.

Nothing is too great for God to accomplish, nothing too small for His attention.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

An Answer For Everything

Read: Philippians 4:15-20

My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. —Philippians 4:19

Dad, can I have 10 dollars?" "Dad, can you help me with my math?" "Dad, what's the capital of Maine?" "Dad, why can't we get another car?" "Dad, I didn't make the team."

The questions and requests and needs of my children seem endless. Whether they are in junior high, in high school, in college, or married, they never stop needing help.

Often I can provide the help they need, but sometimes I am unable to come up with the answer or the solution. As much as I would like to, I don't have an answer or the resources for everything. But I know who does. I know that God supplies all of our needs (Phil. 4:19). And He knows when our requests are genuine needs, or when He must redirect our thinking instead.

Consider this: When we think we are too tired to go on, Jesus says, "I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). When we think no one cares, Jesus says He loves us (Jn. 15:12-13). When we can't figure things out, God says He will guide us (Ps. 48:14). When we need forgiveness, God says He will forgive us if we confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9).

God is our heavenly Father, who wants us to come to Him with our requests. He wants us to listen to Him speak through His Word. He has an answer for everything. —J D Branon

For answered prayer we thank You, Lord,

We know You're always there

To hear us when we call on You;

We're grateful for Your care. —JDB

God never tires of our asking.