

# God's Plan For Mental Health

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## Introduction:

### **A. In today's world, maintaining a good state of mind is extremely difficult:**

1. Our world seems to be becoming faster paced with each passing day – People just do not slow down and this breeds stress
2. Anxieties and worries abound in people's lives as their responsibilities and things they have to care for grow → Again – Stress grows!
3. People having to fight depression is becoming more and more prevalent → Psychiatrist and psychologists are becoming more and more in demand
4. Many people are living in darkness of not have meaning and purpose in their lives! This is a major reason why people (especially the young) commit suicide! It's sad!

### **B. I don't want to put down a person seeing a doctor for a real medical problem with their mental well-being; however, what's wrong in our society?**

1. As sad as these problems are in themselves, what's worse is that they don't have to be!
  - a. These are problems that Christians SHOULD NOT have to deal with!
  - b. The foundation is the fact that one's relationship with God is not right!!!
2. In God we have a peace of mind that passes all earthly explanation! (**vs. 7**)
3. Through Jesus Christ we find the strength and the ability to do all things! (**vs. 13**)

### **C. Keep in mind as we study this that Paul was in PRISON while writing these words!**

1. I have often wondered if this letter to the Philippians wasn't as much for Paul as for them:
  - a. Paul wrote this letter while in chains for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ!
  - b. He could have gotten down and depressed but instead he writes this letter
2. What this says to me is that our peace of mind and our mental well being is not dependent upon what happens to me or around me → It's about what's inside me!

### **D. God gives us the prescription for sound mental health... its found in Philippians!**

## **I. Rejoice In The Lord: (Philippians 4:4)**

### **A. The Christian has every reason in (and out of) this world to rejoice!**

1. We should rejoice because we have our sins forgiven! (**Micah 7:18-19**)
  - a. One of the greatest hindrances to Christian's having the joy in serving the Lord that they could is living with the guilt of past sins!
  - b. If God is has forgiven us, why do we have such a hard time forgiving ourselves?
2. We should rejoice because we have a relationship with the Lord! (**Rom. 5:1-2**)
  - a. The creator of the universe – The one who owns everything that is – The one who controls all things is our God and we are His people!
  - b. He is our Father – Jesus our Lord and Brother
3. We should rejoice because we have a home awaiting us in heaven! (**John 14:2-3**)

### **B. When are we to rejoice? Paul says to rejoice ALWAYS!**

1. Paul is a great example of this rejoicing mindset:
  - a. Paul is under arrest and yet in writing this letter he speaks of being "joyful" or rejoicing over 16 times! He finds reason to rejoice even in bad circumstances
  - b. We've seen this attitude in him before (**Acts 16:23-25**)
  - c. We may have begun to question the Lord and rethink our commitment to preaching the gospel – Paul didn't... he rejoiced in the Lord!
2. Rejoicing always will mean rejoicing in times that are bad as well as those that are good!
  - a. We can rejoice when being persecuted for the Lord's cause because we know we have a reward awaiting us in Heaven (**Matthew 5:11-12**)
  - b. In trials and temptation a Christian will rejoice because he knows that it is producing patience and making him stronger (**James 1:2**)
  - c. When a loved one who is a Christian dies... a Christian, while sad, rejoices!
3. Rejoicing always means that its something that characterizes our entire lives:

- a. Rejoice in the Lord always is the same idea as pray without ceasing
- b. Would others classify you as being a joyous person?

### C. Rejoicing always in the Lord is a powerful force in our lives!

1. This “joy” – Joy in the Lord - is something that no person, event, or circumstance can take away from us (**Romans 8:35-39**)
  - a. It’s a joy that is not dependent upon what happens to me or what is going on around me, but is rather dependent on what’s inside me!
  - b. Our joy hinges upon what we know we have in Christ! No one can take this away!
2. Having joy in being a Christian will give us perseverance and motivation!
  - a. If you ever quit enjoying being a Christian, you’ll quit being a Christian!
  - b. Satan does not have to work hard to pull down someone who is not joyous in their service to the Lord → He already has you down!
3. This joy is something that will be contagious!
  - a. If others, who are not Christians (or not faithful), so you as a miserable or unhappy person → What makes you think they’ll want to be a Christian?
  - b. On the other hand, if they see a person who loves to serve the Lord, whose lives are filled with joy no matter what happens – They’ll want a part of that!
  - c. When a person is filled with joy it will also spread to Christians who’ve lost theirs!

## II. Leave Your Worries With The Lord: (**Philippians 4:6-7**)

### A. We need to realize that as children of God we have no reason to worry!!!

1. Jesus tried to get us to understand this in the Sermon On The Mount: (**Matt. 6:25-34**)
  - a. Jesus points to the birds and the flowers and says that if God takes care of these what makes you think He will not take care of you?
  - b. Worry will not accomplish anything positive for us – ultimately makes things worse!
  - c. If we put the Lord first in our lives and follow Him → God will take care of us!
2. Being consumed by our worries and anxieties shows a lack of faith!
  - a. Jesus said of those who worry... “O you of little faith!”
  - b. Has God not provided for us in the past? Will He not provide in the future?
  - c. Worrying shows a lack of trust in God & an attitude of having to make it on our own!

### B. How Are We To Take Care Of Our Anxieties? Leave Them With The Lord!

1. We have access to the greatest way of dealing with our worries! (**James 5:14-16**)
  - a. If God was able to create this world and breathe life into us, surely He can handle whatever worries and anxieties may enter into our lives!
  - b. James shows the power of prayer in that God will answer it in the healing of the sick and forgiving of our sins → Prayer works great wonders!!!
2. There is AWESOME power in prayer! (**James 5:17-18**)
  - a. Why do you suppose James emphasizes that Elijah was a man JUST LIKE US?
  - b. His prayer wasn’t answered because there was something super-natural about this man... he was just like us... it was answered cause he was a child of God!
3. Paul says we are to be prayerful in EVERYTHING!
  - a. This is an answer to being anxious in nothing – ANYTHING that would cause anxiety for us or make us worry Paul says to answer that in prayer!
  - b. Sometimes I am afraid we feel we must save our prayers for the big things in our lives... this isn’t so!!! Paul says, “In EVERYTHING!”
  - c. I don’t believe there is anything so small to pray to the Lord about!!!
4. Our prayers to the Lord are to be filled with thanksgiving! Why does Paul say this?
  - a. **Illustration:** Song: “Count your many blessings name them one by one”
  - b. Instead of focusing on what’s going wrong... this focuses our minds on what is right in our lives... the things that are good – Our anxieties will shrink!
  - c. Maintaining thankfulness to God will keep things in their proper perspective!
5. Why is it that some Christians are eaten up by worry and anxiety – They aren’t praying!!!

### C. This will create an inner peace that the world cannot logically explain!

1. Paul refers to this peace as a peace which passes all understanding! (**John 14:27; 33**)
  - a. The world looks on in bewilderment at how one could be so composed
  - b. **Illustration:** Family at a deathbed, someone loses a job – Still has peace
  - c. No, the world does not understand... but Christians understand its all about faith!
2. It's a peace that is rooted in our faith that God holds the future and is in control!
  - a. It's the attitude Paul exhibited while in the midst of a shipwreck! (**Acts 27:25**)
  - b. There is a calmness of mind that should characterize every Christian because he knows and has faith in the one who is in control!
3. This peace which passes understanding guards our hearts and minds!
  - a. It's the picture of a military guarding a very special treasure → The military is the peace which God brings and its guarding our mental well-being
  - b. We only make our mental well-being worse when we have worries and anxieties!
    - 1) Worry & anxiety tears us down physically – Makes sick & wears down
    - 2) Worry & anxiety also cause us to slip into a state of depression
4. Faith in prayer work great inner peace because we are leaving it all in the Lord's hands!

### III. Set Your Mind On Good Things: (**Philippians 4:8-9**)

#### A. When we set our minds on the wrong things, it has a devastating impact on us!

1. Sometimes we feel like we can let ungodly and immoral things into our minds and yet it have no impact on how we think! → We are fooling ourselves! (**I Cor. 10:12**)
  - a. We watch movies and shows with immorality and think, "It won't affect me!"
  - b. We listen to music and yet we think, "I just enjoy the tune of the song!"
  - c. We even think thoughts that are wrong and think, "I'd never carry through with it!"
2. It's not wonder some Christians struggle with having the peace of God in their lives... they're filling their minds with things that make for enmity! (**Rom. 8:5-8**)

#### B. There is a great power on our minds and lives in meditating on positive things!

1. Setting our minds on things that are godly, righteous, and good will help us in keeping sin out of our lives:
  - a. Whenever we start to think, say, or do something that is wrong, replace it with something that we know God is pleased with
  - b. Minds are great storehouses and what we put into them determines how we live
2. Meditating on good things will help in abiding in this "peace of God" (**Psalms 63:1ff**)
  - a. **Illustration:** Riding in car, stuck in traffic – Pop in a C.D. of a singing and sing
  - b. There is something calming about meditating upon positive spiritual things!
  - c. When you start to find your stress level, worry barometer, or anxiety gauge rising... stop and think about these things!
3. Christians need to be positive thinkers → People who look for the good in others, in events, and even in circumstances: (**Acts 4:36 – Barnabas**)
  - a. Some Christians seem to be able to only think in negative terms
  - b. Whenever the congregation wants to do something some automatically start thinking, "It'll never work!" → Why not assume it can work and make it work!
  - c. **Illustration:** Gospel meeting: "Attendance won't be good... no one will obey the gospel... I'd invite that person but they'd never come!"
  - d. **Illustration:** Person is attempting to get life right – what do we think?

### IV. Learn To Be Content: (**Philippians 4:10-13**)

#### A. As Paul tries to encourage these Christians at Philippi, he gives a personal example:

1. Just picture Paul sitting in shackles thinking about these thoughts: "Whatever state I am in, I will be content... even in these chains"
2. Paul had dealt with every physical extreme life had to offer!
  - a. He had lived in prosperity and he had felt the hardship of life's poverty
  - b. He had learned how to live hungry and how to live full
3. Not only did he face extremes in the physical realm, but he also faced extremes

emotionally and spiritually:

- a. Sometimes people readily accepted the gospel, sometimes he faced rejection
  - b. One moment people were receiving him, at another he was being stoned
4. There are two great lessons Paul learned from life's extremities:
- a. He learned that no matter what he faced to be content
  - b. He learned he could do anything through the strength he found in Jesus Christ!

**B. It seems that often our worry and anxiety stems from a lack of contentment:**

1. Many are plagued by worry, anxiety & depression that stems from a lack of contentment!
  - a. They never have the inner peace that comes from finding satisfaction
  - b. There's always a need to get more, do better, earn more money, have more stuff
  - c. They wind up living a life where their happiness is bound up in what they have!
2. A lack of contentment in what we have physically breeds worry and sin! **(1 Tim. 6:8-10)**
  - a. Placing our mental well-being, happiness, joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction in earthly gain is only setting ourselves up to live a life of sorrows!
  - b. The more we have the more we stand to lose and the more worry we will have!
3. We should have joy and peace no matter what position we find ourselves in!
  - a. Why? Because what we find joy, peace, and satisfaction in is not bound up in what we have or what happens to us!
  - b. It is bound up in what we know and who we know! **(2 Tim. 1:12)**

**Conclusion:** We forget the great truths taught when children in "I've Got The Joy"