

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (August 6, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

“<sup>12</sup> I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

This is an incredible passage ... one I find hard to fully grasp. Paul (the writer) lived in a much different world than I have ever lived. I've never known real hunger.

Sure, there have been times I've been hungry. I've skipped a meal or two. I've deprived myself for spiritual purposes. I've “gone hungry” in an attempt to lose weight, or to understand what others experience daily, not by choice.

I've been in countries (Cambodia and Cuba) where hunger was present. That hunger, to a degree, exists in Seattle, Spokane, Yakima. Surveys indicate panhandling in the U.S. earns \$4-\$15 an hour. In our cities, here in Yakima, public and private agencies offer meals, housing, healthcare, and other assistance. More is needed. The closest I've been to hunger, real hunger, real want, honest poverty that stuck to my clothes, was in Haiti. It wasn't occasional. It wasn't the exception. In some areas of Port Au Prince, and in other large cities, NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) tried to help. Their attempts, honestly, seem to have little positive effect.

Christians in Haiti know what Paul means in this passage. They understand what it means to depend on God in times of hunger and need. I'm at the other end. I know plenty and abundance. Does that drive me to rely on God for the strength I need? According to this passage it should.

### **Peace and Strength** (Philippians 4:4-14)

“<sup>4:4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had

no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.”

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What does this passage say about experiencing peace?
2. What does this passage say about meeting the God of Peace?
3. What does this passage say about the source of true strength?
4. What does this passage (read the rest of chapter 4 too) say about Paul's appreciation for the Philippian Christians?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

5. What does it mean to, “rejoice always”? Is that possible?
6. What does it mean to think about what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent?
7. What does it mean for the “God of peace” to be with us?
8. What does Paul mean by the “secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need”? What is the secret?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

9. Are you anxious? Why, or why not? On a regular basis are you more anxious or more a person of peace? Explain.
10. Are you a person of prayer? Why, or why not? What role does prayer play (according to verses 4-7) in bringing peace?
11. What do you think about, watch, listen to, allow into your life (music, movies, TV, books, conversations, online)? Is what you take in healthy for you? Your faith? Your relationships?
12. What is the closest you've come to real hunger? How did that affect your relationship with God? What if you were always hungry? How does plenty and abundance affect your faith?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you depend more on Him despite your circumstance. Ask God to help you have more compassion for both poor and rich. He will help you. He loves you.

### **Bible Study Suggestions** (some free copies at the Welcome Center)

1. “Philippians for Everyone”. N.T. Wright
2. “Life Lessons from Philippians: Guide to Joy.” Max Lucado