



August 4, 2019

DIGGING DEEPER

Philippians 4:2-9

The purpose of this document is to help us
take the word beyond our Sunday gathering
and to **think through the practical**
implications of the Scriptures and then to
be intentional about living the word out.

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A Christ-like Countenance

Philippians 4:2-7; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Peter 5:7; Matthew 6:25-32

Questions Worth Asking

The believer that stands firm in the Lord will develop a sure footing in the faith that keeps him/her from wandering, wavering and worrying. Yet, the reality is our footing seems to slip from time-to-time and we need to regroup to make sure we are conducting ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel. Disagreement happens, but that shouldn't lead to division in the body. Difficulties arise, but that shouldn't bring about discontentment in the believer. Situations come that will seemingly never end or appear to be "unsolvable," but that shouldn't cause the peace of God to be absent in the life of the Father's son/daughter. IN THE LORD the body comes together, the believer rejoices always and the son/daughter has a peace that simply makes no sense from a logical position. You are right to think this is impossible, because it is if we are trying to do it on our own. If we are going to have a countenance that reflects the character of Christ no matter the circumstances or conditions that surround us, we are going to have to stand firm IN THE LORD.

1. What things in your life have caused (or are causing) you to wander, waver and/or worry?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- What have you found the impacts to be in your life when you "took matters into your own hands"?
- Why do people feel the need to have all the answers for the next 5+ years in order to have peace today?
- Why is it so difficult to be agreeable even with people that we would be willing to lay down our lives for?

2. How does obedience to the commandments of Christ help us to have agreeable relationships, joy unspeakable and peace that is unmovable?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- How has getting to know Christ and trust in him more impacted the way you deal with difficulties?
- How has a Christ-centered community helped you continue to stand firm in the Lord?
- In what ways has your experiencing God's faithfulness informed the responsiveness of your faith in him?

Steps Worth Taking

Here are some steps that will help you maintain your sure footing in the faith...

1. Practical steps when you sense or see fear/feelings being the driver rather than faith.
 - a. Read a Psalm that reminds you of God's faithfulness;
 - b. Pray the word of God out loud;
 - c. Share the fear/feelings (you can call, email, text, etc.) with a brother/sister in Christ and what you took away from the Psalm;
 - d. Ask the brother or sister to pray with you or for you;
 - e. Allow them to speak truth into your life and the situation; and
 - f. Continually repeat the truth (out loud if you can) and not the lie!
2. If you know of anyone in the faith family that is at odds, help the two heal from their hurts.
3. **Read and meditate on [Matthew 6:25-33](#).** Put your confidence in Christ!

Consumed By Christ

Philippians 4:8; Psalm 1; Matthew 6:33-34

Questions Worth Asking

Anxiety doesn't require or command a little bit of our attention. It consumes the totality of one's life. No matter where we are or what we are doing, whatever we are obsessively worrying about, we are continually responding to. This kind of thinking makes it impossible to focus on the things of God. If we trust in the Lord and cast our anxieties on him because we know that he cares for us, it positions us to experience his peace because we believe that he is capable of resolving the issue. When we have positioned ourselves to experience the peace of God, it frees us up to think on the things of God. And rather than being consumed by False Evidence Appearing Real (F.E.A.R.), we can be grounded in the truth of God's word. Like a breathtaking mountainous terrain, we can be overcome by the splendor, majesty and beauty of God. When our thoughts are captivated by the things of God, that which is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and commendable, it is not possible to be held captive by situations that we know the Savior has already solved. What we continually think on we will eventually act on. May the glory of God consume our thoughts!

1. How have you seen your thought life impact the life you live before others?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- What do you think causes people to feel like their thoughts are controlling them rather than them controlling their thoughts?
- Why don't we seek the kingdom first in moments of turmoil or chaos?
- How does a believer go from having peace in God to feeling overwhelmed by situations?

2. What impacts has regularly meditating on the word of God had on the way you live out your day?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- How has seeking God first helped you put your "problems" into perspective?
- What do you do to give the very real cares/concerns you have over to God?
- How do you keep yourself from picking up the cares that you laid down before the Lord?

Steps Worth Taking

Here are some steps that will help you seek God first...

1. Wake up 30 minutes earlier so you can start your day in prayer and the word.
2. Take a 15 minute break in the morning and afternoon to center yourself on Christ.
3. Close out your day with the Lord. Spend 30 minutes pressing into the presence of God. Read a Psalm of praise and thank God for his many blessings.
4. Make a practice of reading through the Bible annually. That would mean reading approximately 15 minutes a day. Not too much time to ask to spend in the word of the One who won your soul.

Practice Brings Presence

Philippians 4:9; James 1:19-25; Matthew 7:24-27; Joshua 1:1-9

Questions Worth Asking

Paul believed there was a pathway to experiencing a relationship with the God of peace. Practice what we learn, receive, hear, and have seen from the leaders that the Lord has placed in our lives. Do this, and it is a guarantee that the God of peace will be with you. This is not a new model by any stretch of the imagination. The Lord has been saying this since the beginning. Obedience to his truth will ensure that we will have good success. If we are willing to follow the word of God, God promises that he would be with us wherever we go. It is paramount that we not just hear the word, but that we are also willing to do the word we have been so blessed to hear. To hear the word and not do it is Jesus' definition of a foolish individual. Doing the word, however, is not for the faint of heart. We must be strong and courageous. And that strength and courage must come from knowing that God is with us. Trust God and practice (do) what he commands, and you will never have to doubt his proximity in your life. He will be with you wherever you go.

1. Why does it seem so difficult to follow the commands of the Lord?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- What about God's instructions for your life cause you to be fearful and/or discouraged?
- What distracts (wandering, wavering or worrying) you from pressing into the presence of God?
- Why do we try to make God's commands appear to be suggestions that we can decide if we want to follow?

2. How has obedience to God's commands strengthened you to continue to practice his word?

Digging Deeper Discussion:

- How has experiencing the presence of God empowered you to gladly obey his commands?
- How does a firm foundation in the faith keep you when you experience the storms of life?
- What do you do to make sure you are positioning yourself to not just be a hearer of the word?

Steps Worth Taking

Here are some steps that will help you practice (do) what has been preached...

1. Identify an area (wander, waver, worry) that is crippling your connection with Christ.
2. Listen to that particular section in the sermon again. Or just listen to the entire sermon again.
3. Take the Holy Spirit led step to deal with the area that you know has been impacting your faith walk. This is not a suggestion.
4. OBEY LOVE! Do what the Lord has directed of you to do in his word. Be strong and very courageous. The Lord is with you!