

MESSAGE NOTES

Shine Like Stars

The Secret to Contentment

Philippians 4:1–23 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. ²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Joy

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" — Philippians 4:4

Joy originates in God Himself.

In the Book of Proverbs 8, Wisdom is personified as being with God before creation:

"I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him..." — Proverbs 8:30

Joy appears in the wilderness, not after it.

"So He brought His people out of Egypt with joy, His chosen ones with rejoicing." — Psalm 105:43

Nearness

"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." — Philippians 4:5

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted." — Psalm 34:18

"The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness;
He will quiet you by His love;
He will exult over you with loud singing." — Zephaniah 3:17

We are not only singing to God; God sings over us.

Contentment

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." — Philippians 4:6

"To be anxious means that we ourselves suffer.... Thanksgiving means giving God the glory in everything, making room for Him, casting our cares on Him, letting it be His care. The troubles that exercise us then cease to be hidden and bottled up. They are, so to speak, laid open toward God, spread out before Him." — Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians*

The Christian answer to fear is not certainty. It is companionship.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

May 31, 2026

Shine Like Stars / The Secret to Contentment

Philippians 4:1–23

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message notes, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Enter into your small group time with an ice breaker question: What are you looking forward to this summer?

CONNECT WITH GOD (Select one of the below practices or choose a practice from the previous week.)

- **Breath Prayer:** This is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. It is an invitation to remember that God is closer to us than even our own breath! *This week you are invited to use the phrase: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” As you focus on breathing in and out, allow the words to flow from inward breath to outward breath.*
 - **Inhale:** “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God.”
 - **Exhale:** “Have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Continue on for a few minutes at a slowed pace, making space for a growing awareness of God’s Holy Spirit.

- **Read and Journal:** During these next 5-10 minutes, you will practice a version of the Daily Examen of St. Ignatius, a contemplative prayer practice “led by memory.” Follow the five steps below and reflect in silent prayer or journaling.
 - Thanksgiving: Recognize God’s presence right now.
 - What are you especially grateful for today?
 - Petition: Ask the love of God to be with you as you review your day.
 - Review: Recognize any sources of joy, love, and hope from your day and then recognize sources of trouble, darkness, or loss in your day.
 - Have you noticed the presence of God in any of this?
 - Respond: What is my response to God as I remember and review my day?
 - Look with hope for a new tomorrow.
 - How do I want to wake up tomorrow?

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- Begin with **prayer** before reading the passage this week.

- **Together:** Read Philippians 4:1-23 together. Then, enter into a time of personal reflection with Philippians 4:4-9.
- **Alone:** Reflect/Journal on one of the prompts below, with Philippians 4:4-9 as your focus.
 - Using Philippians 4:4-9 as a guide, write a prayer for yourself or for our church. Include phrases or words from the passage in your prayer.
 - How does Paul’s assurance that “The Lord is near” shape how you live?
- **All together** or in **smaller pairs:** Share with one another.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the message notes.
- How has this message series “Shine Like Stars” helped you grow as a follower of Christ?
- What themes or passages have stuck with you? What do you want to continue to reflect on?
- What is the context of this passage? Who is Paul speaking to?
- In Philippians 4:4-9 specifically, are there any specific words or phrases that call your attention?
- What does it mean to “rejoice in the Lord always”?
- What could *gentleness* look like in our world today?
- In a culture like Philippi, why would many of the Philippians feel anxious or worried (verse 6)? How does (or doesn’t) this relate to our lives today?
- Which word or virtue most grabs your attention in verse 8? Why?
- How have you experienced the peace of God in tough circumstances?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the question below, from *The Story of God Commentary: Philippians*:

“The source of the Philippians’ joy is participation in God’s unfolding story of redemption. The joy that comes from participation in witnessing to the gospel is not an end in itself, but a by-product. It is the fruit of life in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). This joy comes not from achieving but from abiding with God, no matter what.”

PRAYER

As a way to close the spring session, share your hopes for the summer alongside prayers of concern. Pray for one another with intention, gentleness, and love.