

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, September 27, 2024

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Today is Friday, September 27 and we are studying what the Bible says about worry.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and loving God, I worship You in the stillness of this day with a thankful heart. Help me hear the message You have for me. Speak to me through the power of Your Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. In a world full of uncertainty and anxiety, You promise hope, peace, joy and gratitude. Teach me the secret of living in Your presence and abiding with You in all circumstances. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

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

## REFLECTION

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul tells us to rejoice and then in case we didn't get it the first time, he repeats himself and says it again. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Paul's letter is full of ideas and inspiration to maximize joy. Paul writes to people who are encountering stress from within and without. The Phillipian Christians were threatened with persecution from people outside the church and were dealing with dangerous divisions inside the church. One of the greatest sources of human joy are relationships. A relationship with God through Jesus Christ brings joy. Relationships with family and friends bring joy. When there is discord, disharmony or division in families and communities, joy is compromised and lost.

Worry is a number one joy stealer. Worry hangs around our home, waits for the smallest opportunity to creep into our heart, looks for an opening to enter our mind and rob us of joy. But the Lord is near. Our loving sentry is on duty to guard our hearts and minds to keep us in perfect peace and utter joy.

We rejoice "in" the Lord. The source of our joy is a personal relationship with the indwelling Christ. Joy is an outcome and a sign of the presence of the risen Jesus in our hearts and lives. A seminary student from London, England compared the presence of joy to the flag flying over Buckingham Palace. The flag is only displayed when the King is in residence. The flag indicates the monarch's presence. Christian joy is evidence that the King of Glory, the Prince of Peace is present in us. Joy is a sign of His abiding, indwelling presence. Jesus is in residence in the temple of our heart. Make room for Him. Open the door wide and invite Him in.

The Lord is near. The peace of God stands watch. The joy of the Lord is ours. Regardless of our circumstances. We can rejoice!

**Ask:** How have I experienced the joy of the Lord in challenges and difficult seasons? Have I observed the joy of God in others - as evidence that the King of Glory is present in them?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy Lord Jesus, I am grateful for the encouragement I find in my relationship with You. Thank You for the comfort I enjoy from Your love, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the tender compassion I find in times of difficulty. Help me learn the secret of having joy and peace. Not only when it is smooth sailing and things are going well, but also when the storms of life come and I encounter problems and unexpected challenges. Teach me to rejoice in You always. Give me the peace that passes understanding and the love that remains steadfast. Amen.*