

Series: Below the Surface.

Scripture and Background Information for April 11-17.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week start our new series: Below the Surface. Together, we will study how the Bible approaches the whole person and deals with our crises. Today we will look at **Philippians 4:4-9**, Paul's dealing with anxiety.

Background for Philippians 4:4-9:

The church in Philippi faced persecution and rejection. Nevertheless, the church sent Epaphroditus to Paul, who was in prison, to support him financially. Paul wrote the letter "Philippians" to thank the church for their support, give them some instructions, and encourage them. Remember, the church faced all kinds of tribulations. Paul, sitting in prison himself, was the right person to understand the church and encourage them to press on in their faith. Before coming to our text, Paul updates the church about his situation in prison. He encourages them that his suffering is for the benefit of others and the advancement of Christ's kingdom (1:21-26). Paul then encourages the church to live the same way. The Philippians should live life so that their lives would be consistent with the gospel (1:27-2:18).

Now, in 4:4-9, Paul calls the church to live out the gospel as an example for their neighbors. For that, he calls them to rejoice in the Lord always.

Some questions to engage with the text:

1. Biblical writers used repetition to emphasize the point they are making. What is Paul emphasizing in our text?
2. When Paul calls the church to rejoice always, what is the object of "rejoicing"? What is the difference between happiness and joy? Is Paul calling to be happy for everything?
3. What are the points Paul gives to the church to always rejoice (V. 5-9)? What is the motivator for that (V. 5)?
4. Who helps to overcome anxiety? Where do we find peace?

Remember: The church was persecuted. Nevertheless, Paul calls them not to give in to anxiety but to focus on God, who is always nearby! Our circumstances might be bad, but our God is good. There will always be challenging circumstances in our lives, but our life is a gift from God. With our perspective on Him, we can overcome our anxieties and live for the good of others.

Scriptures for upcoming weeks:

April 18-24

April 25-May01

Loneliness/Isolation

Addiction