

WHY We must give thanks *in and for everything* Philippians 4:6-7; Eph 5:20



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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

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Summary: *The “problem” with Phil.4:6-7 is that it’s hard to believe we are to thank God in EVERYTHING He’s allowed or even sent into our lives, even all the really “bad stuff”. This teaching shows how and why we MUST start doing this and how it teaches us so much about God himself and what He is doing in our lives. And then how that gives us indescribable peace no matter what is going on in our lives. We also take another look at Romans 8:28.*

Hello, brothers and sisters in the House of God. I’m Philip Shields, host of Light on the Rock, and welcome to another session of living God’s word.

There’s a passage of Philippians which so many of you know by heart – but in my experience **so FEW believers really *practice it***. I believe it to be one of the most difficult of all scriptures to really practice and do. Today I will discuss WHY we must practice what it says to develop a depth with God we may not have experienced before.

Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but *IN everything* by prayer and supplication, *with THANKSGIVING*, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

I’m going to break this verse down and will focusing on “**IN everything**” and **Ephesians 5:20** says “**FOR everything** give thanks” – but other points too.

Thank God for *everything*? Good and bad too? All things? Even for all the bad things? Who does that? Everything and all things must include everything and all things, including what we consider to be BAD things. I mean including

deaths of our loved ones, including terrible pain and accidents, including divorces, including terrible health news from our doctor. Does God really mean for us to thank him for all things including all of those? Understanding this message today will change how you view God and will change a lot in your life if you get it, see it, and apply it.

I believe this scripture means what it says. No matter how “bad” something seems to us, when we really understand how and why we must thank God in and for everything, you’ll start creating a depth of understanding of God’s relationship with you and a profound sense of trust as never before.

But I doubt that most of you would ever normally thank God for literally all things, including some horrible news about your family or yourself for example. But if we’re not doing it, it simply means we don’t really believe Philippians 4:6-7 can possibly mean what it says. It also clearly shows that we don’t trust God is intimately working something out in our lives even especially in our terrible and painful times of our lives. God is there – and not just in the wonderful times of our lives.

So listen carefully and come to understand how and why we must practice **Phil 4:6-7**. In all things - no matter what – we must learn to give thanks.

Remember we are to **live by every word of God, not just the ones we pick and choose (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4; Luke 4:4)** The Bible is not intended to be a spiritual buffet where we decide which items we will choose to eat and which items (Bible verses) we will choose to ignore. Luke 4:4 in all newer translations, by the way, leaves out “but by every word of God”. Those words are there only in the KJV and NKJV, and yet Deut 8:3 and Matthew 4:4 tell us we must live by every word of God.

That tells us we must live also by Philippians 4:6-7 and Ephesians 5:20.

WHY we need this topic: You’ll reap so many blessings you can’t imagine right now. You will reduce stress, and experience the PEACE of God instead. You’ll be part of the JOY of living by faith and trust in God – no matter what. And you’ll come to a much deeper relationship with our Almighty God. PLUS, *I say this from the Bible and from my own experience, you’ll be far more likely to get stunning answers from God when you practice this sermon.*

I’ve talked about these scriptures before, but find people don’t seem to want to believe it means what it says – so they don’t practice it. So let’s examine this most difficult verse to really PRACTICE. And I preach to myself too, as usual.

I recommend you take the time to hear a related, semi full sermon on it given years ago. Here it is:

<https://www.lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/praising-yhvh-our-father-before-we-see-his-answer?highlight=WyJwcmFpc2luZyJd>

Today I'm going to focus on WHY we have to do this as God's children. And HOW to do it.

1. Be Anxious for NOTHING.

Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but *IN everything* by prayer and supplication, *with THANKSGIVING*, let your requests be made known to God;”

I recently heard that the American Psychological Society said Americans are more anxious right now than at any other time in recorded history.

Worrying, fretting, having anxiety is so commonplace today. Hopefully God's children do better than that. We have as our Father the Almighty himself who knows each of us and is aware of everything going on. But we look at our life and fret. We hope Romans 8:28 is for real – that all things will work out for good. But “good” by whose definition? More on this later. But in Philippians 4:6 we're told to be *anxious about nothing*.

BUT, if we could ever start understanding that when God calls us into his family, He gets very involved in every tiny and every big event in our lives. God is refining and purifying his saints – you and me – and He does it largely through pain and suffering and the “bad things” that happen to us. That's hard to believe at first, but scripture after scripture confirms pain and suffering is used a lot by God to refine us. Even his own Son had to suffer pain.

Somehow most of us want to believe that when we pray for help from God that He will usually respond - more often than not - by going beyond even our wildest wishes. And sometimes He does. But sometimes the lions' mouths aren't stopped, as in the days of the Roman Coliseum. Sometimes his people are burned up at the stake and not saved, like Daniel's three friends were.

Our level of trust and faith in God are tested deeply when we suffer, even as we wonder where God is. God needs to see us come through these times even trusting him even *more* deeply than ever after times of suffering. Those who have not suffered much can often appear to be very shallow people.

Think of it: even God's own SON, the captain of our salvation, "was perfected by the things which he SUFFERED" (Heb. 2:10). I have various sermons on "perfection" that explain.

But suffering for perfection is not just for Jesus.

James 1:2-4 says to count it ALL JOY when we have serious trials, for God is working through those very pains, sufferings and trials, to perfect us. **Are you starting to see how we can thank God in EVERYTHING – if we know God is in everything happening to us as His children?** That's a huge KEY. Again, God uses pain and suffering a lot to perfect us.

Many of you struggle with those statements, so can't thank Him for all things.

1 Peter 5:10

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, ***after you have suffered a while, perfect***, establish, strengthen, and settle you."

In fact, Paul came to see that his "thorn in the flesh" was for God's strength to be seen in Paul's weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10), so he praised God for his sufferings!

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ‘

10 Therefore *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*”

IF only we could all see that when God called you to be one of his children, He got so involved in your life implicitly. *And God has always used some level of trial, pain, suffering – to get us to look to HIM and keep looking to Him, instead of the problems.* We must not forget that we belong to him. He bought us. He owns us. *So even if we're not healed, even if we die, even if horrible things are happening, even if we are burned alive at the stake someday and not delivered like Daniel's 3 friends – we must GROW to the point where we're not going to be anxious about it.* We're HIS. He's working in us what he wants in us – more than how our flesh and bodies are doing. Even if we feel God is "not answering", our trust, character, and righteousness" – must remain strong.

But we often get the idea that a loving God would not let so many bad things happen to us. But if we conclude that, we're not understanding his word – or God himself -- correctly.

Re-study Hebrews 11 – and see what it says about God's people: how they suffered, lived in caves, Isaiah was sawn in two!, Hebrews 11 gives both sides how God could choose to answer miraculously (verses 32-35a) , and wonderfully (in our view) – **but other times (v 35b-40) God allowed his own children to die or be tortured. It's all up to God.** When we really love, know and trust God, it matters little actually whether we live or die, for we are the Lord's.

Hebrews 11:32-40

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **out of weakness were made strong**, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. ***They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – 38 of whom the world was not worthy.*** They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, having **obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise**, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

When we come to really KNOW God, we will TRUST Him – no matter what HE does. And IN FACT, WE CAN do so joyfully! It takes Godtesting us in trials to get us there. Heb 10:34 speaks how the Hebrews “JOYFULLY accepted the plundering of your goods...”

Hebrews 10:34-36

“ for you had compassion on me in my chains, ***and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.*** 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. “

Oftentimes we even misunderstand Rom 8:28. Many of you could recite it from memory – but many of you just know the first half of the verse.

Romans 8:28

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Many stop quoting the verse at “work together for good” – *and many interpret that as for Good as WE hope for.* But that’s not what it says. ... “to those who are the called according to **HIS purpose**”. **It will work out for what GOD has in mind! HIS purpose.** *Though we often don’t see or understand what God is doing, we know GOD WILL WORK IT OUT, even if it’s long past our deadline! REMEMBER this first point: BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING.*

*Be GRATEFUL that somehow, even you, even I, are a part of his overall huge plan. God is writing HIS story for you and for him, in YOUR life. **It’s an ADVENTURE! As scary as it often is, it’s an ADVENTURE.** When you change your perspective from WORRY to – This is going to be exciting to see how God works this out. --- you WILL see God more in your life, and hear his voice more.*

Even a trivial example of a camping trip – and our high hopes and then how it poured down heavy rain. But what would have been a normal campout turned into an adventure. It was remembered!

WHEN BAD things happen, it doesn’t mean God isn’t working in your life. It’s in fact the opposite. Be turning to Job 42. WHO sent Job’s trials and sufferings? 90% of people who know the story would say Satan did. But that’s because they don’t understand God uses PAIN AND SUFFERING to perfect us and bring about HIS purposes.

Job 42:11

“Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him **for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.”**

When Joseph’s brothers were selling him into captivity, and when he was thrown into the dungeon after faithful obeying God and NOT committing adultery with Potiphar’s wife... do you remember how Joseph explained all those 12-13 years of trouble?

Genesis 50:18-21

Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?
20 **But as for you, you meant evil against me; but GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.** 21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Looking back at it, it all made sense finally to Joseph – by now 20 years later or so. When we FINALLY UNDERSTAND God uses pain, illness, suffering, trials, even death – to bring about in us what He is producing, we can get to the point of not being anxious for anything. God is refining us as silver and gold, it says in Mal 3:2-3.

So this is how- even when your son or daughter dies and is not healed, even when you lose your job, when we run out of money to live on, even when you're told you have cancer, even when you are not feeling well – we MUST, IN FAITH, BE NOT ANXIOUS FOR ANYTHING!

Go back now on your own and read Jesus' own words in the sermon on the mount, where over and over he says 'DO NOT WORRY about your life, or what you will eat, or what you will be clothed in. DO NOT WORRY!' **Matt 6:25-34. Or as Paul puts it – "BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING!"**

**Yeah – even when they're going to through us into a fire, or torture us, or torture your family, or burn your house down –
Even in our sins.**

2. IN EVERYTHING by prayer, let GOD KNOW your requests WITH THANKSGIVING.

Paul continues: he doesn't say we should just be blind to what's happening, just don't be anxious about it, and talk to God about it. *What was the back story to Phil 4? It was written to the Philippians, remember. You can read the whole story in Acts 16.*

Acts 16:22-32

"Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into

prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27

And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. **30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"**

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

So Phil 4:6-7 says *IN* everything give thanks. Eph 5:20 says "FOR everything give thanks". EVERYTHING.

Ephesians 5:20-21

"giving THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God."

Read that again and again until you can believe that's our instruction. Then **add Phil. 4:6**— "**Be anxious for nothing, but *IN everything* by prayer and supplication, with THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

"EVERYTHING"? Really? It's the thanking God "IN EVERYTHING" part that makes this such an impossible-to-believe scripture for many of you, UNLESS you were listening carefully the last 30 minutes. When WE go to God, we expect him to always work things out better than we can ever imagine – and it's much easier to thank Him for all the good stuff. But "everything" and "all things" is more than just the good stuff.

The truth is, sometimes he does and sometimes we wonder where God is. Sometimes we are not healed, we are killed, we are hurt, we go through the divorce or are ghosted by our own children. Thanking God for everything means EVERYTHING, ALL the time, as it shows GOD we know HE KNOWS what we're going through and He's doing something with the suffering we're going through.

Really, as one man asked me when I gave my sermon – “OK, so I'm supposed to thank God for my hemorrhoids?” My answer: “That's what it says. IN EVERYTHING. What does “everything” mean to you? It could be worse than hemorrhoids. And you are alive. Yes, thank God even IN and for that!”

HOW, WHY? Because we have GOD to whom we can give the problem. WE can ask to be healed. And it shows our FAITH is in him. It shows we believe everything that's going on in our lives, He is aware of, and maybe even sending for his purposes. If he knows every hair on your head, surely he knows if you have cancer or have a severe pain or not. In faith, we know that and trust Him for that.

But what do WE do with “bad news”? Where is our usual focus? On Almighty God, on the Father you have who is king of the universe – or on the problem? Too often, we stew about it. We probably mull it over and over and can't go to sleep – more than we pray about it and then relax. We fret.. We worry, we are anxious. We go over and over in our minds all the possible ramifications of someone's hurtful actions, or the doctor's newest medical report of your cancer or pains, or any stressful events you're going through.

So change your focus. Focus on God, not on the problem. Thanking God even for bad events can turn your entire life around. Don't feed the hurt and just keep opening the wounds. Thank God instead and start feeding your destiny, not your hurt. Let's decide to let go of the stewing over old hurts and times we were disappointed with what we thought were times of God's inaction in our lives. Let's trust God when He closes doors in our lives. And see what doors he may be ready to open when we accept what He's doing.

When Hurricane Matthew was threatening to demolish our home according to the path of the storm, I rebuked it in Jesus' name and told it to go out to sea – for real! And I thanked God that even in the storm, I could go to HIM and not focus on the hurricane and its 135 mph steady winds with gusts up to 150 mph. Then my wife Carole came into the room and asked me about it, and I told her about my prayer. Her response: “So we don't need to worry about our house. And whatever God allows, is fine – as it's his purpose. We'll work with it. Let's not keep thinking about it. Come on, let's get back to bed.”

And we did, and slept beautifully... and Hurricane Matthew DID suddenly veer out to sea and spared our house and all of Orlando, Florida!

LET GOD KNOW. He knows already. He wants to hear YOU tell him, and trust him, and move on! So we trusted – and went back to bed and slept like a baby.

I don't always handle tests that well. TOO MANY times I pondered all my possible options, like moves on a chess game. NO!

Let's remind us what God tells us in his word.

1 Peter 5:6-7

“Therefore humble yourselves **under the mighty hand of God**, that He may exalt you in due time,

7 CASTING all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”. (Ps 55:22)

Hebrews 13:5-6

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; **be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."**

6 So we may boldly say: "*The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*"

Psalms 56:3-4

“**Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.**

4 In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”

- 3.** So first, we don't get anxious, and then we give thanks. Now the 3rd point: **THEN we'll experience A DEEP PEACE deeper than we can explain, no matter WHAT we're going through.**

GODLY peace comes from God. It's even the 3rd Fruit of His Spirit – love, joy, peace.

John 14:27

“**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid**”.

Isaiah 26:3-4

“YOU will keep him in perfect peace,

Whose mind is stayed on You, BECAUSE he TRUSTS in You.

4 Trust in YHVH forever, For in Yah, YHVH, is everlasting strength.”

SO OFTEN, as I allude to in that sermon with the link – so often God’s miracles started when people started praising or praying to God EVEN BEFORE He had done anything. God still does that sort of thing.

When you’re being persecuted unjustly – THANK GOD for that man or women. Ask God to bless them – “Bless your enemies, pray for those who spitefully use you” – remember? You’re FAR more likely to see powerfully answered prayer when you do that. I asked for blessings and forgiveness on a couple people attacking me years ago – and right during the prayer, God gave me some beautiful answers, that must remain private.

BUT what PEACE came about at that moment.

Losing my webmaster for LOTR: Then again, many years ago, maybe 16-18 years ago now, my son-in-law informed me that he could no longer manage my website LOTR (Light on the Rock). Though I had been paying it, I realized that I couldn’t afford to replace him. SO what did I do?

I went to God in prayer, letting Him know what was happening and how I had no money to afford an experienced webmaster. *But I thanked God for the time I did have with my son-in-law* and also told God if he would supply an answer, I’d keep the website going. If there was no answer, I told God I would take that as his answer to let my Light on the Rock (LOTR) site end.

AS I prayed that prayer, and was wrapping it up – my phone rang. It was Scott Doucet on the other end. I had never met him before. Yes, that quickly, God sent me my answer with an expert webmaster – without charge – and God kept Light on the Rock on the internet! But it only happened after I first thanked God even for my son-in-law and the time and work he had put in.

You can read of story after story in the sermon I gave before on this. What should you do when you are afraid? Take it to God! Then – whatever happens, remember you are HIS and let HIM handle it.

One of my favorite stories is the story of **King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron 20**. Please read the whole story but I’ll just summarize the main points.

2 Chronicles 20:1-4

“It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A

great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi).

3 And Jehoshaphat *feared*, and set himself to seek YHVH, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from YHVH; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord."

Read the rest of the story. It was only as soon as the choir and singers began to sing and praise God, that God turned the enemy against each other. *But not until then!* There's a lesson there for you.

2 Chronicles 20:20-24

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, **he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:**

**"Praise the Lord,
For His mercy endures forever."**

22 Now WHEN THEY BEGAN TO SING and to praise, YHVH set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped."

There are so many stories in the Bible and in my own life too, that I could tell.

- My son had fallen off a pick-up truck, banged his head real bad – and scraped his face on the blacktop tarmac – my wife rushed him to hospital as I stayed home and prayed. They found blood spots on his brain. That was NOT good. But I thanked God that I could go to the Almighty in prayer. By next morning, the blood spots were all gone.
- **But sometimes God doesn't give us a wonderful answer from our natural, human point of view.** But even that has got to be OK

too. When our son died, I really did – really thanked God IN that event, and FOR my son dying – as crazy as that might sound. I'm just following scripture. But though I sorrowed deeply, I knew GOD was somehow in it. I had to believe. In that case, my son remained dead. But I had peace.

Whether we live or die, whether we're healed or not, it's all up to God and we belong to him.

But I hope you'll be **moved to practice this very difficult passage in Phil 4 :6-7** to practice -- to not worry or be *anxious about anything* but in everything by prayer – give thanks IN ALL THINGS, *FOR* all things (Eph 5:20) and LET The peace of God come upon you.

Here's a bonus final scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 **in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**”

If you do, your life is about to start drastically changing. (Closing Prayer)