Philippians 4:4-9 English Standard Version (ESV)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Philippians 4:4-7. What concerns, fears, and anxieties do you need to bring before God this week?

Think over the previous week day by day. What do you need to lift up to God in gratitude?

What would you do differently this week if you knew you could not fail? What would you do if you knew for certain that God was with you and protecting you?
John 14:15-17 English Standard Version (ESV)

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 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 hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read John 14:15-17. What promise is made here? As we consider how we ask God for help, we must answer this question in our hearts, “What do I desire more? God’s gifts or God’s presence?”

Read John 14:18-24. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to His followers (those who love Him and keep His commands). Who else does Jesus promises will make their home with us? Why do you think this is significant?

Read John 14:25-31. According to this passage, what does the Holy Spirit do? How does this help us in times of anxiety?
Isaiah 26:1-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:
   “We have a strong city;
   he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks.

2 Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.

3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

5 For he has humbled the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city.
   He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.

6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.”

7 The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous.

8 In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.

9 My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.
   For when your judgments are in the earth,
   the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

10 If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals corruptly and does not see the majesty of the Lord.

11 O Lord, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it.
   Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed.
   Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

12 O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.

13 O Lord our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we bring to remembrance.

14 They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end you have visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them.

15 But you have increased the nation, O Lord, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Isaiah 26:3. According to this verse, who is kept in perfect peace? Why? How do we keep our minds focused on God?
Read Isaiah 26:4. Meditate on the image presented here. Often in scripture God is compared to a rock. What does this image say about who God is?

Reflect on Isaiah 26:8-9. Can we honestly say with the prophet that God and His ways are the “desire of our soul”? If someone followed you for a week, would they say about you that you “earnestly seek” after God? What would such a devotion look like?
Romans 8:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Romans 8:1-11. Paul sets for two options: life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. How does he describe life in the flesh?

How does Paul describe life in the Spirit?

How does life in the Spirit lead us to a life of peace?
Galatians 5:16-26

English Standard Version (ESV)

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Galatians 5:16-26. What are the works of the flesh? Does walking in the flesh reduce or increase fear and anxiety? How?

What are the fruit of the Spirit? How does the Spirit help us overcome past hurts, habits, and hang-ups?

How does walking in the Spirit lead not just to personal, internal peace but relational peace with those around us?