



**The Week of January 9, 2022
It Begins With a Choice
Conversation Guide**

This Week's Take-Aways

- **Self-Control:** (Ephesians 4:22-24) My thoughts, emotions and actions are brought under control through the power of the Spirit as I pursue a holy, God-honoring life.
- **I am Confident:** (1 Peter 1:3-5) Because my hope for the future is placed on the steadfastness of God and the trustworthiness of his promises, I live with confidence.

Intro Questions

- How are you feeling about 2022? Do you think it will be better than 2020 and 2021?
 - What do you fear most in the coming year?
- How would you define anxiety?
- What is something that causes you anxiety or worry?
- Have you heard the phrase "We don't know what the future holds but do we know who holds the future"? How does that make you feel?

Rejoice Always

Philippians 1:12-14

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly.

- Where was Paul while writing this letter to the Philippian church?
- What was his outlook on his imprisonment?
- What can we learn about handling difficulties and things that cause us worry from his outlook?

Philippians 4:4–8 (CSB, emphasis added)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! *Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.

- Can we justify worrying? Is worry avoidable?
- What is Paul's remedy for worry? List out how you should approach this in prayer. (add lines)
- How can we be thankful in the midst of worry and anxiety?
- Think of something that you are worried about right now (and are willing to share). As a group, write a prayer that follows the outline of this scripture.
- What is the promised result of bringing your worries to God?
- What occupies your thoughts most of the time? What does this passage tell us should be the focus of our thought-life?
 - How can you make these positive things a daily part of your life?
 - Are you consuming things (TV, news, social media, etc) that make this harder?

Psalm 34:1–9

*I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
I will boast in the Lord;
the humble will hear and be glad.
Proclaim the Lord's greatness with me;
let us exalt his name together.*

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and rescued me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant with joy;
their faces will never be ashamed.
This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
and saved him from all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and rescues them.*

*Taste and see that the Lord is good.
How happy is the person who takes refuge in him!
You who are his holy ones, fear the Lord,
for those who fear him lack nothing.*

- What are the similarities between Paul's instructions to the Philippians and David's Psalm?
- What are the conditions for receiving God's provision given here?
- Paul and David both had many reasons for fear and anxiety. Where did they find relief and comfort from their anxiety?
- What does it mean to seek the Lord? To fear Him? What practical actions can we take every day to seek the Lord?

Psalm 23 (CSB)

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.
He lets me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside quiet waters.
He renews my life;
he leads me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even when I go through the darkest valley,
I fear no danger,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;*

*you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
as long as I live.*

- What does this Psalm teach us about the character of God?
- How do those characteristics erase any reasons for our anxiety or fear?
- How does shifting our perspective to God's perspective take the power out of anxiety?
- Do you sense security knowing that the Lord is your shepherd?

Next Steps

- Memorize Philippians 4:4-8 this week
- Start a prayer journal this week. Grab a notebook or create a memo in phone. List out the things you are worrying about and pray over them.
 - Find a prayer partner that you can share your worries with and pray for each other.