

## God Promises To Guard Our Hearts and Minds

**Opener:** Without naming names, who has been an example to you of how not to handle stress?

### Scripture

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup>Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:4-9

### Discussion Questions

1. “Rejoice in the Lord always” is often quoted, but what does it really mean to rejoice in the Lord? What’s an example of a time you’ve actually rejoiced in the Lord? Compare it to rejoicing in something or someone else. Philippians 4:4
2. From there Paul says to let our gentleness be evident to all. How does rejoicing in the Lord tie into being gentle? How does it reflect the character of the Lord we serve? Philippians 4:5
3. While anxiety doesn’t empty tomorrow of its sorrows, it does empty today of its strength. How does what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6-7 combat anxiety? How has it worked for you? If God’s peace is guarding our hearts and minds can we still be anxious? Why or why not?
4. So something tough happens. We’ve rejoiced in the Lord and told Him all about it and He gives us His peace. But then we start worrying again. We begin to realize that what we think about can steal His peace or keep it. To keep it, Paul tells us to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy. Imagine an actual situation. What thoughts would fall into those categories?
5. What’s the opposite of that way of thinking?
6. In Philippians 4:9 Paul adds, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice.” How can we be an example to others in the way we handle the temptation to be anxious?
7. How has God fulfilled His promise to guard our hearts and minds in your own life?

### Wrap Up

Anxiety is a huge problem today. There’s no need to describe the anxiety epidemic that far exceeds Covid in severity and reach—it’s all around us. What’s interesting is that the “vaccine” for anxiety is nothing new. Paul lays it out in Philippians 4. Rejoice. Be gentle. Pray. Control your thoughts. Learn from others. It’s not easy, but it’s also not complicated. Give it a shot.