

## Rethinking Your Anxiety

### A Study of Philippians 4:4-7

Characteristic of Completeness: Prayer

Big Idea: Rejoice, relax, release, and rest.

Related Scriptures: Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 40:2-3; 46:10; 62:5-8; 91:1-2; Isaiah 26:3; Luke 12:22-30; Acts 16:11-25; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 1:8-9; 5:7

Introduction:

- A. It was a little over ten years ago, but it's still fresh in my mind. I was concluding my transition from a career in business to a career in ministry. I had no job. I had no home. I had no money. I was ill. My daughter was in Intensive Care, having contracted a staff infection from brain surgery. And, as a concluding part of my seminary education, I was facing an appearance before the entire faculty in which I would be peppered with tricky doctrinal questions in an oral exam for which I was not prepared.

I struggled with anxiety. I remember the periodic panic attacks. I remember the shortness of breath and feeling like I needed to stick my head out the window to breathe. I remember the digestive problems. I remember dreading nightfall when the cold sweats would come as I lay staring into the darkness.

- B. I look back and I can see that my anxiety was tied to difficult personal circumstances. Some people are not so fortunate. Some suffer from a generalized anxiety that they can't readily associate with anything in particular. Others agonize over just about everything, even the smallest of things. Still others are caught in an endless loop; they worry about worrying.

In one way or another, to one degree or another, we worry. We agonize. We're stressed out. It is becoming a hallmark of our American culture.

- C. Last week, I picked up a recently published book titled, *Coping with Anxiety*.<sup>1</sup> The primary author, Dr. Edmund Bourne, has specialized in the treatment of anxiety disorders for many years. He points to a number of cultural factors that contribute to the unprecedented anxiety of our day.<sup>2</sup>

1. First, the pace of life keeps getting faster and faster. Bourne says, "Our environment and social order have changed more in the past fifty years than they did the in the preceding three hundred years."<sup>3</sup> And while we are faced

---

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Bourne and Lorna Garano, *Coping With Anxiety*, (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vii-x.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., viii.

with more and more change, we concurrently find ourselves with less and less rest and time to assimilate and adjust. And so we worry.

2. Second, there is a growing lack of consensus about the standards and values by which we live. We are increasingly faced with conflicting worldviews and moral confusion. To the extent that we have trouble finding meaning in the midst of the mess, we worry.
  3. Third, we are becoming more and more isolated socially. In our postindustrial society, we are losing a sense of connection with our neighbors and our community. At the same time, Bourne says, “we are flooded with media images exhorting us to be perfect (or that we will be perfect if we buy the ‘right’ item), reinforcing values of consumerism, materialism, and instant gratification that only serve to amplify the void many of us feel in our lives.”<sup>4</sup> And so we worry.
- D. A biblical Greek word for being anxious is *merimnao*. It describes being divided and pulled in different directions.<sup>5</sup>

A great illustration of the concept of anxiety and of the meaning of the word *merimnao* is provided by ► the entertainer who spins plates.

He pushes onto the stage, wheeling a cart with stacks of white plates and a bundle of skinny poles. He parks, then draws a pole with one hand and a plate with the other. He plants the pole, which is a little taller than he is, and catches the bottom lip of the plate on the tip of the pole. The he cranks the plate into a tight spin.

Then, he cranks up another one. And another. And another. And another. All standing at attention, spinning in stillness.

Then it happens. The first one begins to wobble. He pretends he doesn’t notice as he keeps adding more plates. Just before it falls, he runs over to crank it back to attention. But there are more wobblers now, so he scurries to revive them. And he reaches a point where he can no longer add new plates. He is left to frantically worry about the wobblers. He’s divided and pulled in different directions. That’s *merimnao*.

That’s your week isn’t it?

That’s anxiety. The wobbling plates are the things that call out for our attention. They are the things we worry about. Your credit cards are maxed. Your inbox is cluttered. You lost your job. You’re overwhelmed with homework. You found a lump. Your kid is in trouble. Your aging parents are fading. You have to give a presentation to a

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>5</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, unabridged ed., s.v. “care, μεριμνάω,” (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing, n.d.).

hostile audience. Your marriage has grown cold. Whatever. We worry. We're divided and pulled in different directions.

- E. How ► are we to deal with our anxiety? God gives us some help through the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians. Our text for study today is Philippians 4:4-7. It ► says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ► 5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. ► 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 comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

From this text, ► I glean four interrelated ways to deal with anxiety. I've boiled them down to four one-word directives that constitute the big idea of my message. Here's the ► big idea: Rejoice, relax, release, and rest. I know this doesn't mean much to you now, but we're going to unpack each of these four words in order.

- I. The ► first way to deal with anxiety is to rejoice. I get this from ► Verse 4, where Paul says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

To ► rejoice means to be glad or to be delighted.<sup>6</sup> At first blush, this may seem unhelpful and even irritating, particularly if you are mired in anxiety. It can seem unhelpful because it sounds like we're being asked to conjure up some cheery emotions that are impossible to produce. And it can be irritating because this is the kind of platitude often heard from unsympathetic, immature people who haven't suffered greatly from anxiety or anything else.

But let's think about this.

- A. This is a command to rejoice from God through Paul. And so, rejoicing must not be an emotion over which we have no control. The reason is simple: God does not command us to do what we cannot do. So, somehow, we must be able to choose to rejoice, regardless of our circumstances. To rejoice is not a command to feel; it's a command to think and do.
- B. And the command to rejoice is coming through Paul—a man whose earthly circumstances seemed to afford little to rejoice about. He was definitely not one of those clueless, unsympathetic people who hadn't suffered greatly himself.

---

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, s.v. “χαίρω,” (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000).

1. Paul was not wealthy. He was an itinerant church planter, trying to make ends meet by making tents on the side. In Philippians 4:12 he says he knows what it's like to be poor, to be hungry, and to suffer need.
2. Paul was chronically ill. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Paul explains that he had some chronic ailment, and he repeatedly pleaded with God to heal him of it. God said, "no."
3. Paul was not powerful. In 1 Corinthians 2:3, Paul confesses to his fellow believers, saying,
 

<sup>NAU</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,
4. Paul was not always happy. In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul says,
 

<sup>NAU</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:8 . . . we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life

That means that, at times, Paul felt discouraged and depressed and even hopeless.
5. Paul was not all that popular. In 2 Corinthians 10:10, we are told that some found Paul to be an unimpressive speaker who preached worthless sermons. History also tells us that Paul was martyred.
6. Paul was not particularly attractive. One ancient historian named Onesiphoros describes Paul as, "A man rather small in size, bald-headed, bow-legged, with meeting eyebrows, [and] a large, red and somewhat hooked nose."<sup>7</sup>
7. Paul was indeed well-educated and smart, but he was shunned by the religious establishment that educated him. And in 1 Corinthians 1:20, Paul argues that his smarts didn't make him any better off.
8. Paul was not married. He was single in a culture where singleness was not cool. And he was not just single; he was celibate, and in 1 Corinthians 7:8, he describes his celibacy as "good."
9. Paul's life was not easy or comfortable. In 2 Corinthians 11:22-28, Paul describes his life as being full of physical torture, imprisonment, threats, weariness, toil, sleeplessness, hunger, and stress.

---

<sup>7</sup> Onesiphoros, *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, quoted by Ronald Brownrigg, *Who's Who in the New Testament*, (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 197), 322.

10. Paul did not always enjoy freedom. Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from an extended stay in a Roman prison.
11. And Paul admits to suffering from anxiety himself. In 2 Corinthians 11:28, he says he worries about things going on in all the churches of his day.

And so, we can't really say that Paul is just telling us to rejoice because he's naive and life hadn't been hard enough to smash his rose-colored glasses yet.

- C. And we can't say that the command to rejoice in our text is an unusual or isolated case. Rejoicing is indeed a theme in Philippians, cropping up over and over again in 1:18; 2:17; 2:18; 2:28; 3:1; 4:4; and 4:10.
- D. And not only does he tell the Philippians to rejoice; he has already modeled it for them. Acts 16 records Paul's initial visit to Philippi—how he and his partner, Silas, were beaten with rods, thrown in jail with their feet put in stocks. Stocks were not only used as a form of detention, but also as a form of torture.<sup>8</sup> Stocks had extra holes that could be used to put prisoners' legs into painful positions.<sup>9</sup>

So there they were, beaten, imprisoned, and in stocks. And that's when they chose to—of all things—rejoice. Acts ► 16:25 records it, saying,

<sup>NAU</sup> Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God . . .

- E. Say what?! How could they rejoice like that in such terrible circumstances? Because the ground of their rejoicing was not earthly circumstances. Notice back in Verse 4 of our text, Paul says the ground of our rejoicing is ► to be “in the Lord,” not in our circumstances.

Let's face it. Our earthly circumstances don't always provide us much to be glad or delighted about. But “in the Lord” we have plenty to rejoice.

Paul doesn't list the specific things the Philippians ought to rejoice about in our text, but I'm confident he discussed the list with them in person, and he's written about it elsewhere. For example, in ► Ephesians 1:1-14 he says believers have every spiritual blessing. “In ► the Lord,” we are secure, chosen, honored, wonderful, accountable, exalted, fully known, set apart, blameless, loved, adopted, rescued, delightful, graced, redeemed, forgiven, cherished, lavished, enlightened, gratifying, mobilized, sought after, and sealed by God no matter what.

<sup>8</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 370.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

I challenge you to go back and review the basis for the believers' rejoicing in Ephesians 1:1-14. I preached several messages on this text in July, 2005. Transcripts are available on the church website.

We are to rejoice in the Lord regardless of our circumstances. We are to rejoice in the Lord on the basis of blessings which transcend our circumstances.

- F. When exactly are we to rejoice? One ► word answer: "Always."
  - G. For how long are we to rejoice? Same answer: "Always." The first way to deal with anxiety is to rejoice.
- II. The ► second way to deal with anxiety is to relax. I get this from ► Verse 5, where Paul says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

- A. To be ► "gentle" means to be yielding, kind, courteous, tolerant, not insisting on every right and letter of law or custom.<sup>10</sup> Today we say, "relax" or "chill out." This is precisely what we tend *not* to do when we're uptight and anxious. Instead, we tend to be touchy, edgy, irritable, unkind, ungracious, cranky, and prickly.
- B. To ► "be known" for gentleness suggests a knowledge acquired through experience or association.<sup>11</sup> So this is not about telling people how gentle you are; it's about letting them experience your gentleness as they associate with you. This gentleness is not weakness; it is strength under control.
- C. The implication is that, even in the midst of circumstances that conspire to produce anxiety, we are to relax and be gentle. We are to be known for it. We are to relax and be gentle, even toward the ones who may be provoking anxiety.

Isn't it ironic that Thanksgiving Day can be a day when relational conflict comes into focus? Maybe your parents are going to be miffed that you're spending Thanksgiving with the in-laws. Maybe your mother-in-law is going to give you that look or make some snide comment about how you keep house. Maybe tensions will run high because you're running late and traffic is awful or the airport is packed. Maybe Uncle Ned going to drink too much and make a fool of himself again this year.

Make up your mind now to relax and be gentle regardless.

---

<sup>10</sup> W. Bauer, F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., s.v. "ἐπιεικής," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), hereinafter abbreviated BDAG.

<sup>11</sup> BDAG, s.v. "γινώσκω."

D. I can almost hear some of you thinking, “God help me!” And He does. He’s right there with you. That’s what I think Paul means when he says, ► “The Lord is near.”<sup>12</sup> The psalmist agrees the Lord is “a very present help.”<sup>13</sup> So relax. Breathe easy. And be gentle.

In dealing with anxiety, first rejoice, then relax.

III. The ► third way to deal with anxiety is to release. I get this from ► Verse 6, where Paul says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Some of you may be thinking, “Yeah, yeah, I’ve heard that verse before. I’m supposed to pray, right? Well, I did pray and it didn’t help. I’m still worried. What else you got?”

Not so fast. Yes, Paul is calling us to pray. And, in fact, ► prayer is our Characteristic of Completeness for the week. But I want you to see what I often miss: This is a prayer of release. And you say, “Release what?” Let me explain.

I have a bad habit. I can be a worrier. It may surprise you to know that at the heart of my worrying is usually some confusion about who God is. God speaks right to my problem in ► Psalm 46:10 when He says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Psalm 46:10 “Cease *striving* and know that I am God”

God is saying to me, “I am God; you are not.” A guy like me ought to get that. But I don’t. Not always. You see, behind the curtain of my socially acceptable anxiety can lurk some things that are pretty ugly: selfish pride, stubborn self-sufficiency, a compulsion for control, the thinking that everything is up to me or God needs me to help Him out. Anxiety is often me playing God; trying to control everything; trying to push my superior agenda; thinking that I know best; thinking that no one else can be trusted to do things right, including God. In times of anxiety, the thing I need to release is the idolatrous illusion that I am God.

Over the years, I have prayed in the midst of anxiety, demanding a lot, but releasing nothing. I’ve even used Verse 6. When I’m anxious, I want to skip to the bottom line, so I look at Verse 6 and just pick out ► the two commands: “Be anxious for nothing” and “let your requests be made known to God.” Standing alone, the first command—“Be anxious for nothing”—does not strike me as particularly helpful. When I’m deeply worried about something, no one has ever been able to get me to stop by simply saying something like, “Don’t worry about it.” And so I skip to the second command: “let your requests be made known to God.” So I do. “Lord, make me feel better. Make the kids straighten up. Heal grandma. Make my presentation go well. Provide for me. Give me strength.”

<sup>12</sup> D.A. Carson, *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 110.

<sup>13</sup> Psalm 46:1.

But I still worry. I demand, but don't release. I'm still a tight-fisted controller. I'm often just asking God to help me be a better controller. But God is not interested in sharing His throne with me.

And then I think to myself, "Why am I letting my requests be made known to God? Does He not know? Does He need to be prompted in order to care for me properly? Do I have to ask for *everything*? What if I miss something? What if I don't even know what I need?"

And then it occurs to me that this must not be about informing God because He already knows everything. Neither can this be about telling God how to care for people better because He already cares perfectly. This must not be about changing God at all. It must be about changing me, encouraging me to release the illusion that I am God—that I am in control.

The ► middle part of Verse 6—the part I tend to skip—describes the method of release. In fact, the middle part is Paul's point of emphasis.<sup>14</sup>

- A. I release ► "by prayer and supplication." The word, "prayer" comes from the Greek word *proseukae*. The word, "supplication" comes from the Greek word, *dehsis*. At first blush, using them together seems redundant. *Proseukae* and *dehsis* mean basically the same thing. In fact, both words are translated by the English word, "prayer" in other parts of the Bible. Nevertheless, when presented together, the words *proseukae* and *dehsis* do convey different perspectives that are important to understand.
1. "Prayer," from the word *proseukae*, points to God. The word is always used of praying to or making requests of God alone, not other people. "Prayer" emphasizes the character of God and our devotion to Him.<sup>15</sup> He is the one in control. He is sovereign. We are the sheep of His pasture.
  2. While "prayer" points to God, "supplication" points down to us. "Supplication" emphasizes the expression of a personal need.<sup>16</sup> It humbly acknowledges who needs who.
  3. And so, the pair of words gives perspective to our prayer. Prayer points up—God is God. Supplication points down—I am not. God is God and I am not. In dealing with anxiety, that is where I must start. Noted author ► Philip Yancey, in his latest book titled, *Prayer*, says this:

---

<sup>14</sup> The fact that the methodological modifiers—"in everything," "by prayer and supplication," and "with thanksgiving"—precede the main subject and verb—"let your request be made known"—suggests that the method is the point of emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. "προσευχή," (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Thayer, s.v. "δέησις."

*God invites us . . . to stop being God for a while, and let him be God. . . ▶ To let God be God, of course, means climbing down from my own executive chair of control. ▶ I must uncreate the world I have so carefully fashioned to further my ends and advance my cause. ▶ Adam and Eve, the builders of Babel, Nebuchadnezzar, the South African guards, not to mention all who struggle with addictions or even ego, know well what is at stake. ▶ If original sin traces back to two people striving to become like God, the first step in prayer is to acknowledge or “remember” God—to restore the truth of the universe.<sup>17</sup>*

4. Letting ▶ my requests be made known by prayer and supplication changes things. Yes, I pour out my heart to God. Yes, I tell Him what’s on my mind. But I no longer use prayer as just another anxious attempt to regain my control or restore my agenda. I release my false god-grip.

When anxiety-provoking events occur—cancer, job-stress, busyness, betrayal, marital conflict—yes, I’m bummed, but I recognize that God is in this and I ask Him what part He wants me to play. God is God and I am not.

Yancey ▶ explains it this way:

*It occurs to me, thinking about prayer, that most of the time I get the direction wrong. ▶ I start downstream with my own concerns and bring them to God. I inform God, as if God did not already know. I plead with God, as if hoping to change God’s mind and overcome divine reluctance. ▶ Instead, I should start upstream where the flow begins.*

*▶ When I shift direction, I realize that God already cares about my concerns—my uncle’s cancer, world peace, a broken family, a rebellious teenager—more than I do. ▶ Grace, like water, descends to the lowest part. Streams of mercy flow. ▶ I begin with God, who bears primary responsibility for what happens on earth, and ask what part I can play in God’s work on earth.<sup>18</sup>*

Prayer and supplication get the direction right. This helps with anxiety because it’s a big relief when I quit trying to play God or persuade God.

- B. I pray the prayer of release not only by “prayer and supplication,” but also ▶ “with thanksgiving.”

<sup>17</sup> Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 26-27.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

1. I used to think that this meant that I am supposed to have an attitude of gratitude when I pray. That's nice, but it's not exactly what Paul is saying. In this case, "thanksgiving" does not describe an attitude; rather, it describes the specific expression or content of gratitude.<sup>19</sup> It's not just a general thankfulness; it's the giving of thanks for specific things.<sup>20</sup>

So on Thanksgiving Day, when I gorge myself on turkey and dressing and then push back from the table and say, "Boy, we sure have a lot to be thankful for," that's not thanksgiving, at least not the kind Paul has in mind. Paul is talking specific content, not platitudes. The thanksgiving Paul has in mind answers the question: For what specific things should you give thanks to God?

2. What things come to mind? If you're like me, you tend to think of earthly circumstances. Thanks for my health. Thanks for my family. Thanks for my home. Thanks for my career. It's not wrong to be thankful for these things, but it can be dangerous. It's dangerous to limit my thanks to earthly circumstances because they can change in a heartbeat. Ask Job.

In the past, I've given some shaky advice to my own children in relation to earthly circumstances: "Be thankful; think of all the people who are less fortunate than you." I don't say that so much anymore. You see, if I'm ranking folks on good fortune, somebody's got to be the least fortunate. Am I saying the least fortunate person has nothing to be thankful for? How about the next-to-the-least fortunate? How about the bottom tenth?

I suspect that Paul is not focusing on earthly circumstances at all. Remember: Rejoice *in the Lord*, not circumstances.

Scott Anderson would not rank high on good fortune. He's ► confined to a wheelchair with Cerebral Palsy. He wrote an article published just last week in anticipation of the Thanksgiving holiday. He ► writes:

*Now I am 35 years old and still single. ► Trust me—it's not for lack for trying. In fact, it's not even because my standards are too high. . .*

► *Anyway, this year has been a serious challenge to my trust in God.*  
 ► *God brought a wonderful woman into my life, and we started dating. ► The relationship got serious and we both started talking about spending the rest of our lives together. ► I thought, "Thank you God. After 35 years of being alone, you are going to bless me." . .*  
 . ► *Everything was going great until one day she walked into my*

<sup>19</sup> BDAG, s.v. "εὐχαριστία."

<sup>20</sup> Thayer, s.v. "εὐχαριστία."

*office and surprised me. “Scott, I can’t live with your disability for the rest of my life.” And she walked out the door and out of my life.*

► *The truth of the matter is, from a purely human standpoint, I can never be content with my life. On this earth, I will always use a wheelchair, I will always have my past . . .*<sup>21</sup>

How in the world can Scott Anderson give thanks? He can. And he does. He concludes his article by writing this ► prayer, in spite of his circumstances:

*Thank you, God, for your unfailing love. ► Thank you, God, for loving me enough to let Jesus bleed for me. ► Thank you, God, for making me just the way I am, funny accent and all. . . . ► Thank you, God, for shining through me. ► Thank you, God, for using me for your purposes. . . .*<sup>22</sup>

Scott does what we should do. He stuffs his prayers full of thanksgiving—the kind that does not depend on earthly circumstances. Giving thanks like this helps me with anxiety in several ways. It helps me see that the most important gifts in my life—the things of eternal value—are things that I don’t have to worry about. It also helps me see who’s in charge because I certainly didn’t do anything to save myself; God arranged it. And it helps me see how gracious God is toward me. By His grace alone through faith alone ► in Christ alone I am secure, chosen, honored, wonderful, accountable, exalted, fully known, set apart, blameless, loved, adopted, rescued, delightful, graced, redeemed, forgiven, cherished, lavished, enlightened, gratifying, mobilized, sought after, and sealed by God no matter what.

When I pray with this kind of thanksgiving, it helps to release the burden of anxiety. Maybe you could even use this list in giving thanks on Thanksgiving Day. The transcript will be on our website this afternoon.

In dealing with anxiety, first rejoice, then relax, then release.

IV. The ► fourth way to deal with anxiety is to rest. I get this from ► Verse 7, where Paul says,

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is a promise, not a command. But the implication is that we are to rest in the promise. It’s a promise of peace to those who rejoice, relax, and release.

<sup>21</sup> Available from [http://sermoncentral.com/article.asp?article=a-ScottAnderson\\_11\\_13\\_2006](http://sermoncentral.com/article.asp?article=a-ScottAnderson_11_13_2006); Internet; accessed 13 November 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

- A. ► “Peace” describes “the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot . . .”<sup>23</sup>
  - B. It’s a peace ► that “surpasses all comprehension.” It makes no worldly sense in light of our earthly circumstances.
  - C. It’s a peace that ► will “guard” us, providing security and protection.<sup>24</sup>
  - D. It’s a peace that will guard ► our “hearts,” which refers to our overall disposition—the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life.<sup>25</sup>
  - E. It’s a peace that will guard ► our “minds,” which is more specific, referring to our thoughts.<sup>26</sup>
  - F. It’s a peace that will guard our hearts and minds, even though the difficulty or our circumstances might not change at all. That’s the kind of peace I want. That’s the kind of peace we get when we rejoice, relax, release, and rest.
- V. This ► week, you and I have an opportunity to apply all this. It’s Thanksgiving. This Thanksgiving, take a holiday from anxiety. This Thanksgiving, I’m inviting you come over to God’s place, where you can enjoy a delightful four-course meal: rejoice, relax, release, and rest.

<sup>NAU</sup> Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. 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 comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

---

<sup>23</sup> Thayer, s.v. “εἰρήνη.”

<sup>24</sup> BDAG, s.v. “φρουρέω.”

<sup>25</sup> BDAG, s.v. “καρδία.”

<sup>26</sup> BDAG, s.v. “νόημα.”