**1. Motivate**

When has the taste of water felt especially good?

* Worked a long time in the heat
* played sports in the heat of the day
* long hike without a canteen
* after being in a place where well water tasted like Sulphur
* after a hot day in Disney World
* to wash out a bad taste in your mouth
* after taking some nasty medicine

**2. Transition**

Sometimes we become *spiritually* dehydrated.

* We need spiritual refreshing
* We can deepen our relationship with God by spending time with Him every day.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Begin with Praise

Listen for a repeated command.

Philippians 4:4-5 (NIV) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Paul was writing from a jail cell. What kinds of things *could* he have communicated?

* I don’t deserve to be here
* it’s cold, stinky, totally unpleasant
* curses on those who put me here (may the fleas of a thousand camels infest their pillows)
* I’m mad at God … why did He let this happen

Instead of this, what *are* Paul’s comments and exhortations.

* Rejoice in the Lord always
* *again* I say, rejoice
* your gentleness should be evident, obvious
* maintain a good witness
* let the Fruit of the Spirit be demonstrated in your life

What is your initial reaction to the command to rejoice?

* yeah, sure …
* easy to say, harder to do in the midst of a crazy-hectic life
* I’m too busy to rejoice
* life is a circus – the one with the scary clowns
* I feel like I’m in a grinder, nothing to rejoice about here

So, what type of things *would* causes you to rejoice?

* answers to prayer
* seeking children and grandchildren grow in following the Lord
* beautiful sunsets
* pretty flowers, colorful birds
* seeing the power of nature demonstrated
* meaningful relationships – within families, with fellow believers
* good preaching
* great music

How then can we rejoice when things are not going well?

* sing a hymn like “*Count Your Blessings*” (put the lyrics of a verse on the screen and sing right now in class)
* read the Psalms … David expresses all kinds of feelings … sometimes complaints and rejoicing in the same chapter
* make a decision to praise God, anyway
* remember we talked about the difference between joy and happiness … joy does not depend on the circumstances … declare your joy (rejoice) no matter what

What would the motivation “the Lord is near” have to do with rejoicing and gentleness?

* God is present in our lives, in our situation
* He is watching
* the very Spirit of God dwells within the life of each believer
* His presence is worth rejoicing about
* His power at work in your life can and will demonstrate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control

How do these concepts relate to our emphasis on spending time with the Lord daily?

* God’s presence in our lives is not meant to be a “silent” partnership
* He is not dwelling within us just to eaves drop on what we say and what we do
* He wants to communicate to us through what He has said in His Word
* He wants us to speak to Him in thanks, in praise, in worship
* He wants us to express our trust in Him to answer our prayers and meet our needs

If you were more thankful, joyful, and gentle, how might your family and friends be affected?

* the attitudes and actions would be contagious
* a smile results in a smile returned
* kind and pleasant words are reflected back – the opposite happens also, grumpiness is returned with a similar attitude
* for some of us, a joyful and gentle attitude would *surprise* our friends and family!
* it raises the “warm fuzzies” quotient in our relationships

3.2 Praying Brings Peace

Listen for the alternative to worry.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What is the remedy for anxiety Paul commends to his readers?

* don’t be anxious
* pray about everything
* include thanks to God in your prayers
* consider *beginning* your prayer time with praise and worship
* then ask God to deal with those things in your life that concern you

Paul says to pray instead of worrying. How does talking to God work better than worrying?

* you’re talking to Someone who can do something about the problem
* you are focusing on Jesus who knows you, understands you, understands the problem and knows the solution
* worrying is not faith … Romans 14:23b, “and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”
* praying is acting in faith … telling God you are trusting in His power, authority, and love to meet the need

What outcome results from such praying?

* peace of God comes to you
* this is peace that is often at odds with the situation
* God’s peace is beyond our understanding
* God’s peace guards your hearts and minds, you emotions and your intellect
* helps you make good decisions, not panicky decisions

What differentiates the peace God gives and peace as we might usually think of it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Man’s Peace | God’s Peace |
| * temporary
* based on current situation
* means “lack of conflict”
 | * present in any situation
* can rule over all kinds of conflict
* permanent
 |

Why is the peace that God gives beyond understanding?

* God is meeting the need in ways we cannot imagine
* God’s resources are beyond what we can know
* it is peace in the midst of a non-peaceful situation

3.3 Dwell on the Right Things

Listen for what to focus on.

Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV) Finally, brothers, 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. 9 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.

What are the qualities of wholesome thoughts? What are their opposites?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wholesome Thoughts | Opposites |
| * true
* honorable
* just
* pure
* lovely
* commendable
* morally excellent
* praiseworthy
 | * false
* immoral, dishonorable
* unfair
* obscene, corrupt
* unlovely, ugly
* wrong, lamentable
* corrupt
* shameful
 |

How does *thinking* on these things affect the way we *act*.

* recall the computer terms “Garbage In, Garbage Out”
* the topics we think about the most show up in the way we act
* if I focus on sports most of the time, then I will be involved in sports, talk about them, use sports terms, collect sports stuff, spend my money on sports
* same thing is true for the virtues in Paul’s list
* contrast to focusing on some of the opposites … if we think about those things, then we act in ways that cause us harm and do not glorify the savior

How can we practice the things Paul taught in the passage? How do you keep your focus on godly thinking that leads to godly living?

* must make the choice as to what you read, look at, think about
* keep busy … when your mind is idle, it’s too easy to follow after things that are on the negative side of our list
* “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop (playground)”
* fill your mind with God’s Truth … daily reading and meditating on God’s Word

In addition to these qualities Paul taught about, he also modeled them before those around him. Who in our lives needs to see us model these qualities?

* children
* grandchildren

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

A video of the application points is available.

View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_unts4c87>

Download (best if you have no WIFI where you teach) from <https://tinyurl.com/yyomgtdg>

* people we work with
* neighbors
* young believers in our church

Application

Praise daily.

* Begin your day—every day—with praise.
* Instead of focusing on your aches and pains, praise God.
* Praise puts the day ahead of you into perspective.

Pray daily.

* Set aside time every day for uninterrupted prayer where you give God your full attention.
* At this stage of your life, you can control your schedule.
* Prayer is a daily decision.
* Pray about your day, and pray for the challenges others are facing.
* Let the peace of God rule your heart as you leave these needs in His hands.

Read daily.

* Get into God’s Word daily.
* Choose a Bible reading plan, and/or use this book as a guide for your daily focus in God’s Word.
* Partner with others in your group to support and encourage each other in your daily prayer and reading.

Fallen Phrases

This ain’t a plumbing job, but I can tell the letters have fallen out of their columns straight down. As the lesson said, “don’t worry”! Replacing some letters are easy to figure out, like where there’s only one blank in that column. Look for two or three letter words and figure what two or three letters in those columns make a sensible word. If you’re stuck go to <https://tinyurl.com/yyomgtdg> You can find other Family Activities there also.