



Family Sunday School

“Life Can Be Hard” Series

Lesson 5 - How to deal with... worrying about the future

Introduction: Not knowing what lies ahead can produce anxiety. We worry that the good times won't last or that the bad times will last forever. Our last lesson in this series will center around verses from Philippians, in which Paul reviews the main points of a letter he wrote from prison to fellow Christians. You will be able to hear the scripture during the Kitchen Table Gathering and revisit it during the week with your family.

(Sundays at 10:30am on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/elcserves>)

Start the Fun!



Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xQBGh4qD2k> and listen to the song “Rejoice in the Lord Always.” Have you heard this song before? Practice singing and signing (ASL) this joyful song. Now try singing it as a round with your family:

(Group 1 sings)

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.
Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.

(Group 2 starts at the beginning now. Group 1 continues on)

Rejoice, rejoice, again I say rejoice.
Rejoice, rejoice, again I say rejoice.

(Repeat all)



Read together (2 Parts)

Paul Writes from Prison

Philippians 4:4-9 (New International Version)

(4:4-7) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Discuss - Part 1:

Ask: What kinds of things do you worry about? What does the Apostle Paul, the founder of the church, who is writing this advice to fellow Christians, encourage people to do when they are worried?

Discussion points for parents: First, Paul says to be gentle or kind. This seems like strange advice, but he may be saying that when people are mean or unfair to us we should be humble and not get worked up about it. We can see stressful encounters with people as opportunities to react as Jesus would, with humility and love. This will show others the difference being a Christian makes in our lives. This will also bring you peace later, when you remember how you responded and not suffer regrets for losing your temper.

Second, Paul says to remember that God is near and that we should bring all of our worries to God in prayer. He says to ask God's help with thanksgiving. In other words, we should remember all of our blessings in times of worry. Then we can count on God's peace, which "transcends all understanding" to come to us. I think this is important, that we do not try to understand how God will fix our problems. We need to be humble enough to trust God completely and let our anxiety melt away.

(4:8-9) 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. 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.

Discuss - Part 2:

Ask: What is Paul's final advice here about finding peace in worrisome times?

Discussion points: We are to put our minds on positive things. When you watch a scary or sad movie, you stay scared or sad for a while afterward, right? Find peace by focusing on the good. Avoid too much depressing news or conversation. Make it a practice to look at the Good News Network on a daily basis <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>. Mostly, train your mind to focus on God's word and who God is when you are troubled.

Related verse: *Matthew 6:25-26, “Do not be anxious for your life . . . Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”*



Pray

Think about the things that are making you anxious about the future. When you pray to God about them, first be thankful for the blessings you do have. Then humbly ask God to help you, trusting that God loves you and will take care of you.

Participate

Craft and Music: Make Percussive Instruments

Materials:

Whatever the children can find around the house, in the recycling bin, the kitchen, or among their toys.

Directions:

Percussive instruments make noise when they are shaken or hit with the hand or an object. Encourage the children to find containers they can put small objects in and shake or to find two objects they can hit together.

Sing “Rejoice in the Lord Always” again, this time making two beats at the end of each line with your new instruments. Make a joyful noise!

For older children: Create a short, repetitive song like “Rejoice in the Lord Always.” Notice how the person who wrote that song used Philippians 4:4 and just repeated parts of it to fit with the tune. Choose a Bible verse that brings you peace or happiness. Borrow a tune from another song, or come up with a tune on your own. Consider sharing your song with us at our next Zoom meeting!

Some happy verses

Psalm 30:5 *For God's anger is but for a moment, God's favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*

Psalm 37:4 *Take delight in the Lord, and God will give you the desires of your heart.*

Psalm 144:15 *Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.*

James 5:13 *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*

Psalm 34:5 *Those who look to God for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.*

Wrap Up

God loves you. You have nothing to fear. You can rejoice in your relationship with God and in your salvation. Rejoice!

Take a Moment to Breathe

Breathe In, Breath Out, Relax

Find a comfortable seated position. Bring focus to your breath. Breathing through your nose, take a slow deep breath in. After you reach the top of your breath, slowly exhale out through your nose. After the exhale, relax your body. Repeat 4 to 6 times. You can even try this while laying down before going to sleep at night.

As an alternative, after each breath cycle, relax a different part of your body, starting from your toes and working toward your eyes. Your pattern could be, toes, feet, legs, belly, chest, arms, shoulders, chin, eyes.