

## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

### **Thoughts About God**

Write what God has done for you in the past, present and future. Write these individually, then share them together as a family.

**Goal:** To increase the focus on God and his love and provision. This helps to reinforce the truth about God. It also increases family cohesion and communication when discussing these thoughts.

### **Think on These Things / Don't Think on These Things**

Read Philippians 4:8 and Galatians 5:19-21

After reading the scriptures look at how thoughts produce attitudes and attitudes result in behaviors/outcome (see attachments). Generate dialogue around examples from each one.

**Goal:** To emphasize how our thoughts play out in our lives. This is a good opportunity to discuss that God has a plan for every aspect of our lives including our thoughts. When we think according to how He has instructed, our lives have more positive outcomes.

### **Healthy, Realistic, Biblical Thoughts**

Identify scriptures that relate to how we need to think about:

God – Self – Others – Life

Each person in the family can look up scriptures related to these four areas or (see attachments). If children are too young to do a Bible search, they can be involved in reading the scripture or telling what book of the Bible it is in, etc.

**Goal:** To reinforce the Bible as the source of truth for our lives. Family dialogue around the relevance of each scripture and what those truths mean in everyday life will be lessons they will carry with them throughout adulthood.

### **What Were They Thinking?**

Read the Bible stories (see attachments) as examples of how our thinking results in behaviors. Ask each family member to discuss one of these from the handout or any story from the scripture and discuss what the Bible characters must have been thinking. This assignment can be given in advance so everyone has time to prepare.

**Goal:** Increase Bible knowledge and see the connection between our thoughts and actions.

### **Worry Solutions**

Have a family conversation that helps everyone explore the human tendency to worry. Ask the following questions?

When have you worried?

What did you do to stop worrying?

What can you do in the future to keep worry from becoming a habit?

**Goal:** To be comfortable discussing emotions within the context of the family. This gives parents an opportunity to be real and authentic with struggles but also talk about overcoming a struggle.

### **Addressing Fear**

As the question, "What does it mean to have a fear and not be fearful?" This opens dialogue about normal fear (a tornado is headed to our town) versus living in a state of fear (getting anxious every time it storms).

**Goal:** To open up dialogue about fear and provide an opportunity to help family members overcome unhealthy fears.

### **A Story of Forgiveness**

Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 30 – 50. Tell this story in a conversational style. Discuss how Joseph did not remain bitter but forgave his brothers. Have family discussion around why forgiveness is important.

**Goal:** To prepare children to think in terms of forgiveness. This reminds everyone of God’s love and forgiveness for us through Christ.

### **Three Categories of Thinking**

(See attachments) “Choosing Our Thoughts.” Discuss:

Thoughts that are not true – Change to truth.

Thoughts that are true and hard – Add a BUT and a hopeful thought.

Thoughts that are true and good – Dwell on these.

Generate examples in each category.

**Goal:** To keep the mind sharp on how to filter thoughts and keep them truthful and Biblical.

### **The Process of Change**

Look at the CHANGE model (see attachments). Ask each person to select a letter and discuss the scripture and why that behavior is important in order to make changes in our lives.

**Goal:** To emphasize that change is a process and there are many aspects that can help us to make those changes that truly impact our lives.

### **Staying Plugged In**

Have each member of the family complete “How Plugged In Are You?” (see attachments). Discuss the questions on this page. The bullet points after each of the five areas are good points of discussion (in workbook).

**Goal:** Remind each member of the family how important God, Family, Friends, Gratitude and Rest are in our lives. These can always be healthy and productive points of discussion regardless of age.

## **Mind Check-up**

Prepare a large poster board with two columns: Healthy and Unhealthy. Discuss that healthy is truthful, helpful, hopeful and unhealthy is negative, critical, worried, fearful, etc. Over a one week, two week, etc. period of time ask family members to put check marks (don't have to reveal the thoughts) under each column when they have awareness of thoughts. The thoughts or the identity of the person making the check mark does not have to be revealed. This may allow for more honest self-assessment. At a designated family meeting time evaluate overall health of the family by tallying the check marks in each column. Then ask for volunteers to share good thoughts or any unhealthy thoughts they might need help with from family members. Possible dialogue:

How do these checks reflect the atmosphere in our home?

If more positive or negative, why?

How does everyone else's thoughts affect me?

**Goal:** To make the health of our thinking an important part of family life, and to realize that our thoughts, attitudes and behaviors affect others. Being willing to open up about our thoughts and feelings can take time but it is an important life skill. This activity provides a non-threatening way to practice this and see the positive benefits. Being aware of what we think and feel and how to appropriately respond is emotional intelligence. A loving, Christian family is the best place for children to learn this.

## **SCRIPTURES ON WORRY**

Read Philippians 4:6-9 and Matthew 6:25-34 (see attachments) or read from Bible. Discuss what the scripture tells us to do, not to do, how worry affects us, etc. Discuss the difference in worry and concern. As a family work through God's Rx for Worry (see attachments) to see that taking intentional steps to look at the worry, pray about it, then seek positive thoughts will result in peace.

**Goal:** To look to scripture to gain understanding that worry is not God's plan for us. Also, to see that just telling ourselves not to worry is often not going to stop it, but working through it can help decrease the worry and increase peace.

# **ATTACHMENTS**

THINK ON THESE THINGS  
PHILIPPIANS 4:8

**DWELL ON THOUGHTS THAT ARE:**

HONORABLE  
JUST  
PURE  
LOVELY  
COMMENDABLE  
MORALLY EXCELLENT  
PRAISEWORTHY

**HABITUAL THINKING PRODUCES AN ATTITUDE THAT IS:**

JOYFUL  
CONSIDERATE  
SINCERE  
WARM  
FRIENDLY  
COMPASSIONATE  
HUMBLE  
PATIENT  
GRATEFUL  
PEACEFUL  
OPTIMISTIC

**ATTITUDES ARE SEEN IN OUR LIVES THROUGH:**

SUCCESS  
SECURITY  
ENERGY  
HAPPINESS  
GROWTH  
HEALTH  
FRIENDSHIPS  
LOVE  
FAITH  
COURAGE

**DON'T THINK ON THESE THINGS**  
**GALATIANS 5:19-21**

**DON'T DWELL ON THOUGHTS OF:**

ENVY  
GREED  
BITTERNESS  
PRIDE  
ANGER  
SELF-PITY  
SEXUAL IMMORALITY  
SELFISH AMBITIONS

**HABITUAL THINKING PRODUCES AN ATTITUDE THAT IS:**

INCONSIDERATE  
CYNICAL  
RUDE  
IRRITABLE  
NEGATIVE  
SELFISH  
DISSATISFIED  
CRITICAL  
IMPURE  
JEALOUS

**ATTITUDES ARE SEEN IN OUR LIVES THROUGH:**

WORRY  
DISSENTIONS  
FRUSTRATION  
JOB BURNOUT  
SICKNESS  
FATIGUE  
LONELINESS  
INSECURITY  
BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

## **GOD**

Isaiah 40:28-29 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God the Creator of the whole earth. He never grows faint or weary; there is no limit to His understanding. He gives strength to the weary and strengthens the powerless.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **SELF**

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come.

Galatians 3:28 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you --- this is the Lord's declaration-- plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

## **OTHERS**

Matthew 5: 43-44 You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemies. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

John 13:34-35 I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

## **LIFE**

John 16:33 I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.

James 1:2-4 Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

John 10:10 I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.



## WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

Read the following Bible stories and write what you think was going through their minds. Remember thoughts produce actions. Based on what they did, what were they thinking?

David and Goliath – I Samuel 17

The giant, Goliath, strutted and scoffed before King Saul's troops and left them mentally beaten before the battle began. David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, decided he would fight this giant. His brothers and King Saul discouraged him. He fought the giant with slingshot and a stone and killed him. Before the battle David said, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." v. 37

What was David thinking when he prepared for battle?

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Paul and Silas – Acts 16:22-31

Silas joined Paul on his second missionary journey. They were brought before the chief magistrates and accused of disturbing their city. The mob attacked them, they were stripped of their clothes, beaten with rods and thrown into prison. They were secured with chains. About midnight while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God there was an earthquake. The doors were opened and everyone's chains came loose.

What were they thinking when accused by the magistrates, beaten and thrown into prison, and decided to pray and sing praises to God?

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Mary Magdalene – Mark 16:9

Mary Magdalene's life was dramatically changed when Jesus drove seven demons out of her. Her life prior to knowing Jesus must have been full of turmoil, confusion and ridicule from others. Seven demons could produce a lot of bad behavior! After her encounter with Jesus she became a devoted follower. She was present at the crucifixion and was on her way to anoint Jesus' body on Sunday morning when she discovered the empty tomb. Mary was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection.

What was she thinking after he drove out the demons and she decided to follow Jesus? What was going through her mind on her way to the tomb?

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Joseph – Genesis 37-45

Joseph was Jacob's favorite son. He had ten older brothers who conspired against him. They left him for dead and he spent many years in hardship. He was betrayed by his family, punished for doing the right thing, sent to prison and was forgotten by those he helped. Through a series of events he rose to power and was a ruler of Egypt, second in command to Pharaoh. When his brothers went to Egypt for grain, Joseph confronted them and told them who he was and that he forgave them.

What was Joseph thinking when he saw his brothers and decided to forgive them?

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Peter – John 21:15-19

Peter was a leader among Jesus' disciples – one of the inner group of three. He was often impulsive and spoke without thinking. He also denied Christ three times the night before the crucifixion. After Jesus' resurrection he confronted Peter on the shore of a sea and began a process of restoration and forgiveness with one of his closest disciples. He was not a perfect person but he was a person who was changed by Christ's love. After the death of Christ he was the first great voice of the gospel during and after Pentecost.

What was Peter thinking when Jesus met him on the shore and confronted Peter with his denials?

What was Peter thinking when he preached the message of Christ to the early church?

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## CHOOSING YOUR THOUGHTS

NOT TRUE

**STOP**

TRUTHFUL

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We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.  
II Corinthians 10:5

TRUE & HARD

**BUT**

HOPEFUL

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I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. **But** take heart! I have overcome the world.  
John 16:33

TRUE & GOOD

**DWELL**

HELPFUL

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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.  
Philippians 4:8

## CHANGE

- C** Commitment to Change  
“Commit your activities to the Lord, and your plans will be achieved.”  
Proverbs 16:3
- H** Have a Plan  
“Practice these things; be committed to them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.”  
I Timothy 4:15-16
- A** Awareness of Obstacles  
“Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”  
I Peter 5:8
- N** Never Give Up  
“So we must not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.”  
Galatians 6:9
- G** Give God the Glory  
“I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 1:6
- E** Express Your Success  
“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.”  
I Thessalonians 5:11

## HOW PLUGGED IN ARE YOU?

On a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, circle the number that best describes the level of connection and the power you are receiving in each area.

God – Spiritual Growth      1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Family      1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Friends      1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Gratitude      1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Rest and Relaxation      1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

What area(s) do I need to move more toward a 10?

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What can I specifically do to have more power in those area(s)?

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How will that change my life?

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## **Philippians 4:6-9**

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving; let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, 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 any praise – dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

## **Matthew 6: 25-34**

This is why I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the sky: they don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow; they don't labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these! If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't He do much more for you – you of little faith? So don't worry, saying "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

# GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR WORRY

## PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9 (HCSB)

The following is an exercise that breaks down the scripture by verses (in bold print) with narrative and instructions (normal print) to help take the scripture into life application.

### Verse 6 **Don't worry about anything.....**

What is your anything? List below your current worries or problems:

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Know that if you continue to think on these things you will be using your mental energy in a negative way. Direct the energy that would be spent in worry to faith, trust and belief.

### **But in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.**

But means to look at what was previously said and what follows the "but" is an alternative solution. So the alternative to worry and anxiety (the emotion that follows worry) is prayer and thanksgiving.

Pray and ask for what you need. (strength, courage, wisdom, etc.) Be specific.

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Thank Him that now:

You have faith in Him.  
He is a loving, faithful Father.  
He has the answer.  
He will supply all you need.  
You have a support system.

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Remember that God can provide in ways you can't even imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Do not underestimate what God can do. BELIEVE!!!!

**Verse 7      And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

This is a promise – peace – a result of the previous steps (no worry, being thankful, asking and believing). Don't expect peace to come with worry, negativity, doubt and unbelief. These are not from God so His peace can't come from them. Your emotions (hearts) and your thoughts (minds) will be guarded (controlled by the Spirit) when you follow these steps.

**Verse 8      Finally, brothers ..... (He surely knew we would need to keep working on this.)**

**Whatever is:**

**Honorable**\_\_\_\_\_

**Just**\_\_\_\_\_

**Pure**\_\_\_\_\_

**Lovely**\_\_\_\_\_

**Commendable**\_\_\_\_\_

**Of Moral Excellence**\_\_\_\_\_

**Of Any Praise**\_\_\_\_\_

**Dwell on these things.**

Your list of things to dwell on (above list) can change often with new thoughts. As you practice this form of thinking versus worry and negativity the Spirit in you will give you more thoughts that result in peace.

**Verse 9      Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me.....**

Think about the Bible studies you have attended, what you have learned in your small groups, the sermons you have heard and the faith you have seen modeled to you from others. These are inspiring and motivating but they will not be enough unless you DO SOMETHING to put them into practice in your own life. When you live out your beliefs you are letting the Power of Christ become a living message.

**And** (something else will follow) **the God of peace will be with you.**

This is a promise. God's peace is available if you do it His way.



