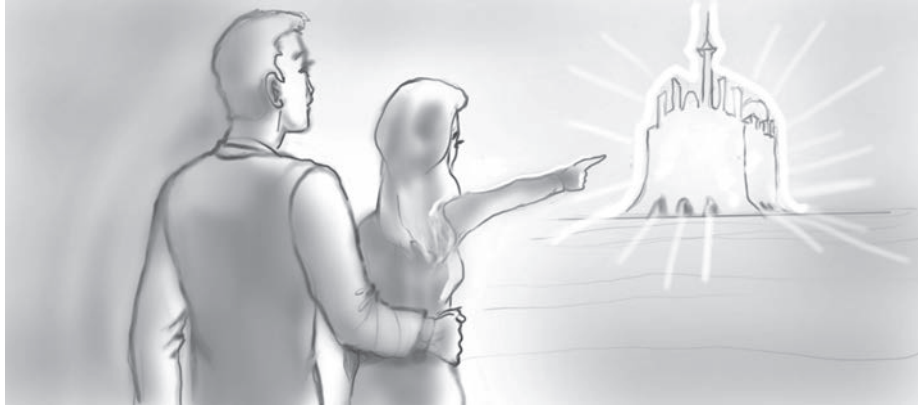


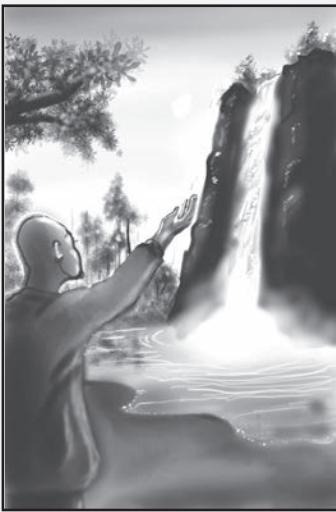
A Member of God's Family in Heaven



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Philippians 3:17–21; 1 Corinthians 15:42–44; John 14:27; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Philippians 4:4–13, 19.

MEMORY VERSE: “Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks” (Philippians 4:6, ICB).



As members of God's kingdom, God gives us many blessings.

THIS WEEK, we will finish our study about Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul's letter to the Philippians is filled with valuable lessons, advice, and sayings for daily living. Paul included many of these sayings in the final verses of his letter. Paul's words are similar to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus taught His followers how to have a happy, faith-filled life. Paul also tells us how to live a joyful Christian life.

Often things happen in life that we don't like. But we don't need to worry. The Bible gives us many important rules to help us stay strong and solve our problems. So, we don't need to worry. We can let God fill us with peace. God gives us this precious peace. He controls the future. He controls our lives now. He will give us everything we need.

Most important, we don't need to depend on governments or their leaders to give us hope or peace. As Christians, we are part of the family of heaven. As members of God's kingdom, God gives us many blessings. God also expects us to serve Him, too.

GOOD EXAMPLES (Philippians 3:17–19)

Paul lived during very evil times. We do, too. The question for us is: With so much evil around us, how should we act or behave?

Read Philippians 3:17–19. Paul talks about good and bad examples. What are these good and bad examples? How can we know the good from the bad?

Paul feels love for the people he disagrees with. Paul cries for them! Do you see that Paul doesn't say that these people are his personal enemies? Paul says that they are really "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18, ERV). Paul understood that they were sinners in need of a Savior (read Ephesians 2:11–14). We all are. So, we all need Jesus. Our need for Jesus makes us all the same.

Paul tells the Philippians to think about the good examples, and not the bad ones. Paul wants his readers to watch carefully people who live much the same as he does. Then the Philippians should copy the way these people live. Paul says something much the same in his letter to the Romans. Paul warns the Romans, "My Christian friends, I want to tell you something important. Be very careful about people who teach wrong things. They teach things that are different from God's true message that you learned. Those people cause you to quarrel with each other. They cause people to turn away from [reject] God. You must stay away from them" (Romans 16:17, EASY). Paul says that these false teachers in Rome can't be trusted: "Men like [the same as] that are not working for our Lord Jesus Christ. They are chained to [under the control of] their own desires [sins]. With soft [nice] words they say things people want to hear. People are fooled by them" (Romans 16:18, NLV).

Of course, Jesus is the only perfect example. At the same time, there are Christians who are good examples for us to follow. Now think about your own life. What type of example do you show to other people?



"They [false teachers] are chained to [under the control of] their own desires [sins]."

STAY STRONG IN THE LORD (Philippians 3:20, 21)

What does Paul say about being a member of God’s family in heaven? Read Philippians 3:20, 21 for the answer.

Paul talks about the enemies of the cross. He says they “will be lost for ever. Their belly is the god they worship. They boast [brag] about things they should be ashamed of. They think only about things of [that belong to] this world [life]” (Philippians 3:19, WE). Christians think about the things in heaven. That’s because Christians are members of God’s family in heaven. Jesus Christ is our King. Paul says that Jesus will “change these weak bodies that we have now on this earth” (Philippians 3:21, EASY). Until that happens, we may suffer from disease, pain, and death.



So, for Paul, our being members of God’s family includes the promise of everlasting life and the resurrection.

Look up the following verses. What do they teach us about the new bodies that Jesus will give us?

Job 19:25–27 _____

Luke 24:39 _____

1 Corinthians 15:42–44 _____

1 Corinthians 15:50–54 _____

Colossians 3:4 _____

In the end, Jesus will destroy death. Death is our last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). This promise gives us hope. Jesus will end death and give us new bodies (Philippians 3:21).

So, for Paul, our being members of God’s family includes the promise of everlasting life and the resurrection. The resurrection is the time when Jesus will wake up His loyal followers from the dead at the Second Coming. Then we will have a whole new life. We can’t even start to picture in our minds this brand-new life!

Why is the promise of everlasting life so important to everything that we believe as Christians? What can this life possibly offer us that’s worth more?

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS! (Philippians 4:4–7)

Read Philippians 4:4–7. Where does the peace come from that Paul talks about in these verses? How do we get it?

Again, Paul talks about the need for church members to work together for peace (Philippians 4:1–3). Then Paul switches to a new topic: rejoicing in the Lord (Philippians 4:4–7).

How often do you worry about problems that get solved soon after they happen? Things often seem worse than they really are. So, Jesus tells us not to worry about them (read Matthew 6:25–34 and Matthew 10:19). Peter tells us that we can trust Jesus with everything that upsets and worries us. Jesus cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). As problems grow worse worldwide, we should be filled with hope. These problems are a sign that Jesus' coming is very near (compare Matthew 24:33; Luke 21:28; James 5:8).

What is the answer to worry and fear? The answer is the prayer of faith (Philippians 4:6, 7). For sure, we must believe in Jesus and trust that He hears our prayers. Also, we must act as if our prayers are already answered before we see them answered. We must pray with a spirit of thanksgiving. We also must ask God with all our hearts to answer our prayers. At times, when we pray, we will ask for answers (read the following examples: Luke 1:13; Philippians 1:19; 1 Timothy 5:5; James 5:16). We must ask for the things that God promises (1 John 5:14). Then we can trust that God will answer our prayers. Then we can rest and have peace. We know that God accepts these types of prayers.

How do the following verses help us to understand God's peace? Psalm 29:11; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; and 1 Corinthians 14:33.

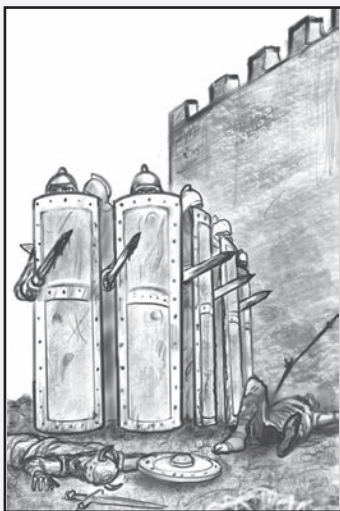
This life can't give us God's peace. God's peace comes from the hope we have in God's gift of everlasting life (Romans 5:1; Romans 6:23). This peace fills us with hope. We can't fully understand it (Philippians 4:7). But we do know that God's peace changes every part of our lives!

What does it mean to have God's peace?



We must ask for the things that God promises (1 John 5:14). Then we can trust that God will answer our prayers.

THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS (Philippians 4:8, 9)



The word for “stand guard” in Philippians 4:7 comes from the Greek word “phroureō.” In the Greek language, this word is used to mean a group of soldiers who guard a city against enemies.

God gives us peace that is beyond anything we can understand. This peace also “will stand guard over all your thoughts and feelings” (Philippians 4:7, ERV). We need to protect our spiritual life. The word for “stand guard” in Philippians 4:7 comes from the Greek word “phroureō.” In the Greek language, this word is used to mean a group of soldiers who guard a city against enemies (2 Corinthians 11:32; compare Acts 9:24).

Another very important part of having peace in our hearts includes obeying God’s law. “Those [people] who love your teachings will find true [real] peace. Nothing will defeat them” (Psalm 119:165, ICB).

Read Philippians 4:8, 9. What advice does Paul give his readers in these verses?

In Philippians 4:8, 9 (WE), Paul gives us a list of six important things to fill our minds with. Paul encourages us to follow his example. Paul also talks about each of the things on his list. He encourages us to think about things that are:

1. **True:** Jesus often starts His teachings with “I say to you the truth.” The whole New Testament tells us that the truth is very important to God. (Read Acts 26:25; Romans 1:18; 1 Corinthians 13:6; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Timothy 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22; and 1 John 2:21.)
2. **Honest:** Because we love Jesus, and He is the truth, we should always be honest. This word is also written as “respected” in other verses. (Compare with 1 Timothy 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2.)
3. **Right:** God is holy because He always does what is right. (Compare how this word is used in Philippians 1:7.)
4. **Clean:** Our thoughts and behavior should be clean. We accept with faith God’s holy life. His life makes us clean (read 1 John 3:3).
5. **Lovely:** This word talks about the beauty we see in nature. God made many beautiful things on earth.
6. **Good:** A good person is kind, caring, and loving.

Also, always think about the things we should thank God for.

**PAUL'S ADVICE FOR A HAPPY LIFE
(Philippians 4:10–13, 19)**

Read Philippians 4:10–13, 19. What advice does Paul give us for a happy life?

When hard times happen, we start to think about the things that really matter. Hunger, sickness, suffering, and loss can teach us to thank God for His blessings. When we feel sad or in need, our faith in God keeps us strong (Philippians 4:12).

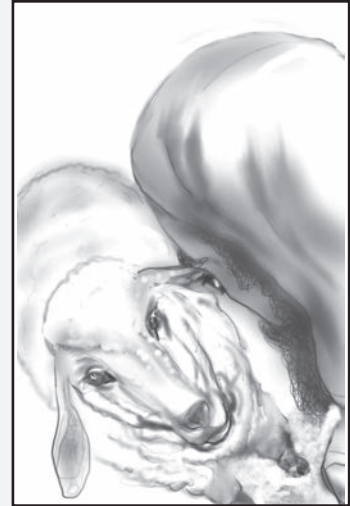
Also, when we have enough or more than we need, we should always remember that we could lose everything in an instant (read Proverbs 23:5). Both Job and Paul tell us that we didn't bring anything into this life with us when we were born. When we die, we will take nothing with us to the grave (Job 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:7).

The Bible gives us wonderful promises for a happy life. Let's look at a few of them:

- **Psalm 23:1:** "The LORD takes care of me, like [the same as] a shepherd with his sheep. I have everything that I need" (EASY).
- **Matthew 6:32:** "Your Father in heaven knows you need all these things" (NLV).
- **1 Peter 5:7:** "If you have any kind [type] of trouble in your mind, give it to God. God has promised to take care of you" (EASY).
- **Philippians 4:19:** "My Lord God in heaven has plenty of good and valuable things. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will give to you everything that you need" (EASY).

The Bible also gives us this most wonderful promise of all: "I can do all things because Christ gives me the strength" (Philippians 4:13, NLV). When we ask God for His help and strength, we also must ask Him to do what He thinks is best for us. We can ask God to keep the following promises and to give us the following things:

- To save our family and friends (1 Timothy 2:3, 4).
- Courage to share our faith (Revelation 22:17).
- Forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Strength to obey God's law (Hebrews 13:20, 21).
- Love for people who hate and hurt us (Matthew 5:44).
- Wisdom to solve our problems (James 1:5).
- Wisdom to understand the Bible (John 8:32).



"The LORD takes care of me, like [the same as] a shepherd with his sheep. I have everything that I need."



“God gives us all the supplies from His storehouse that we need.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “God knows everything we need. He gives us those things. The Lord has a storehouse filled with riches. He gives us all the supplies from His storehouse that we need. So, why don’t we trust Him more? God made precious promises to His children. If we obey God, He will keep those promises to us. God can remove every problem we have. He also can solve every problem. He can make the weak person strong. He can take away all our fears. He can help us do any good thing.

“So, we must not look at ourselves. The more we think about our mistakes, the more we will become weak. Then we will have less strength to solve our problems.”—Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him*, page 224, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about times when God answered your prayers. What did these experiences teach you about God’s peace? What about prayers you are waiting for God to answer? How can you feel God’s promise of peace in your heart while you wait?
- ② Read Philippians 4:8 about thinking good thoughts. What are some of the good things that you spend your time thinking about? How do these things make your faith strong? How do they make your relationship with the Lord strong, too?
- ③ Read the quote above from Ellen G. White again. Think about these sentences: “The more we think about our mistakes, the more we will become weak. Then we will have less strength to solve our problems.” What, then, is the secret to solving them?

WANTING TO BE A RICH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

Little Rene liked everything about Seventh-day Adventists. Rene was born in the Philippines and grew up there. All rich people were Seventh-day Adventists in Rene's town. The Seventh-day Adventists had big rice farms. They had good lives. Rene wanted a good life, too.

Some Seventh-day Adventist children invited Rene to read the Bible with them. Then the son of his dad's boss invited Rene to Sabbath School and church. The boss was a Seventh-day Adventist rice farmer. At church, Rene learned about the Sabbath. Rene also saw that the Seventh-day Adventist children wore nice clothes. Rene liked that the children didn't use cuss words. Rene wanted to be the same as they were.

When Rene was 12, he was baptized and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Rene didn't get rich. His life got worse. His family hated his religion. They stopped supporting his studies. Rene was forced to quit school. Four years later, when Rene was 16, he left the church and joined his father in the rice fields of the Seventh-day Adventist farmer. Soon he was drinking, smoking, gambling, and eating meat that wasn't clean.

Two years later, a 17-year old named Rodel knocked on Rene's door. Rene's mother answered.

Rodel said, "I'm a Bible worker. May I come in?"

Mother asked, "What's your religion?"

Rodel said, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist Bible worker."

Mother said, "Ah. My son is Seventh-day Adventist, too. But he stopped going to church."

Rodel asked, "Where is he?"

Mother answered, "He's sleeping."

After working all day in the rice fields, Rene was very tired. Mother led Rodel to him.

Rodel said, "My friend, why did you stop being a Seventh-day Adventist?"

Rene was surprised. But he said he wasn't going back to church. He said, "My family hated my religion."

Rodel asked, "Will you come with me to church?"

Rene said, "I don't think so. I can't go."

Rodel left. But a year and a half later, when Rene was 20, Rodel came back.

Rodel said, "My friend, let's go fishing." Rodel didn't try to convince Rene to go to church. Rodel just wanted to be Rene's friend. So, Rene and Rodel went fishing together. After a while, Rene started going back to church on Sabbaths.

Rene Tucaldo is the top money manager of the 1000 Missionary Movement in Silang, Philippines. Read more next week.

INSIDE *Story*



**Rodel just wanted to be
Rene's friend.**



Rene Tucaldo