

Need a Lift?

by Bryan Gibson

For your spirits, that is? Philippians 4:1-13 provides some divine help. Using that passage, along with a few others from the same epistle, here are six ways to lift your spirits, guaranteed by God.

Rejoice in your brethren, your family in Christ. “My beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown”—that’s how Paul described his fellow saints (4:1). Earlier in this same epistle, he wrote, “For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ” (1:8). You’re not in this alone; find those who are “striving together for the faith of the gospel” (1:27)—your “fellow workers” (4:3), and rejoice in them.

Make a conscious effort to rejoice. “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4). Sounds very much like a commandment to me. Remember, Paul was in prison when he wrote this epistle (1:12-14), but he sure didn’t sound like he was down in the dumps. Focus on your blessings, not your burdens, and give thanks to God (4:6). In fact, go ahead and give thanks for your burdens, too, because they may be just what you need to keep you humble.

Stop worrying so much and start praying. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (4:6). Paul most certainly understood the power of prayer (1:3-5, 9-11, 19), and so should you. After all, you’re praying to the One who “shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (4:19).

Get your mind on the right things, and see if you don’t feel better right away. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (4:8). What a contrast to the mindset of those described in the previous chapter: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame—*who set their mind on earthly things*” (3:18-19).

Obey the Lord. Hard to be at peace when you don’t know the Lord is with you. But here’s how you can know: “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (4:9). “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure” (2:12-13).

Learn to be content. “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (4:11-13).