

It's hard to believe that we are right here at the penultimate sermon on Philippians, that we've almost made it through an entire book in just a couple of months. How far we've come from the 17-year excursion that was Luke. If you have your Bible, I would invite you to open it to Philippians 4. We'll start in verse 2. And here what Paul is trying to do is he's trying to give you a little bit more detailed instructions about how to accomplish some of the tasks he's already told you before. Sometimes the simplest of tasks needs some detailed instructions. Let me give you an example in my own personal life. I can count on one hand the total many of times I have been on a golf course. and my game reflects it. If I'm going to do well though, it is almost always with a certain person. You guys know him, his name is David Henderson. And the reason why I do well with David is not because he doesn't make fun of me, he does and I deserve it, but because he gives me detailed instructions in a way that I can comprehend. Hey, shift your feet this way. Hey, instead of just trying to murder the ball, actually focus on swinging. Keep your head down. Keep your eye on the ball. Things that I can actually implement. I'm never gonna be Tiger Woods. No one will ever confuse me for a professional golfer, but I can be better that day than I was the time before. And I needed somebody who was an instructor who could say this simple task, hit ball into hole. Let me give you some detailed ways you can do that better. Well, what Paul does here is he says the three ways that you get to, as you and I were talking about, thinking others more significant than ourselves, putting those gospel blinders and focusing on Christ and Christ alone, he will say, it is unity, it is peace, it's obedience. Those three, with detailed instructions, help us to be more the church that Paul is calling us to be. Before we read his word, let's go to him in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the saints and specifically for those men of old who wrote down your words that we might know them. that they might do their work upon our hearts, that it might help to reveal to us areas where we genuinely need to refine ourselves to be more like our Lord and Savior and more like those who have come before us. We ask that you would help us. Help us to see you and know you through this word. Help this word to live deep in our hearts that what people might see in us are unified Christians who have peace and joy, who obey not in order that they might receive forgiveness, but obey because they already have. All of this in a way that brings you and you alone all the glory and honor. Amen. Philippians 4, starting in verse 2. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice. And the Lord always, again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers. Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is pure, whatever is just, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. Praise be to God for his wholly inspired and inerrant word may he write its eternal truths on all our hearts. We have three pieces here, three paragraphs. The first one is talking about unity. It seems to have been in the background for most of this letter as Paul began to describe what it is to have a mind like Christ. And if you remember, what is the

description of the Christian mind, of the mind of Christ? It's a mind that considers others more significant than self. That's what the Christian mind is. And so now what has been in the background comes shooting to the foreground. There seem to be two women who are not getting along, who are in conflict with one another. And these two women, have been true companions. They've also been those who labored in the gospel with Paul. These are not just contentious women who are having a conflict over something secondary or tertiary. No, no, these women seem to be those who are genuinely concerned about the gospel, genuinely concerned about evangelism, and probably what sits at the heart of their conflict is a genuine disagreement somewhere about doctrine. You see, serious evangelical faith can lead to zeal, which causes conflict. I know you've probably seen this across church history or maybe even in your own life where someone, not a central gospel issue, not an issue about justification and how it is that you and I are made right with God, but some other issue all of a sudden gets elevated to the prime issue. And you have to agree with me on this. And if you don't agree with me on this, that's it, we're done. And Paul seems to say unity is one of the marks of the church. It's one of the ways that we show that there's something greater than us to which we're committed. I don't always have to be right. I'm willing to submit myself to others. I'm willing to think others more significant to myself as we work through this unto gospel ends, unto evangelical Christian ends. That's how he wants this to play out. And sometimes that requires the help of others. Notice he uses Clement here. We don't know who Clement is. This is his only appearance throughout the entire Bible. But apparently Clement is somebody who Paul trusts. Trust to shepherd through conflict. Probably what you and I would think of as an elder. Somebody who has that level of character. Somebody who's not like a Titus 3 person. You know, someone who is quarrelsome. Ligon preached on that last Sunday. But instead, probably someone who in themselves exudes peace. I can think of people, our elders, my mind immediately goes to them who represent that to me. One of them happens to be right here. And they are the sort of people I would go to if I had trouble, if there was conflict and I needed someone to help me move towards reconciliation. Sometimes we get so trapped in ourselves and in our own opinions, we need someone from the outside who also knows how to prioritize the gospel and others to help us see what is right and wrong. We don't have the same eyes as Christ. It's not what you and I are called to. We're trying to penetrate, but sometimes we have blind spots. And so we have to lean on others to help us see those blind spots in order that we might be united. Because when a watching world sees a fractured church, somehow, somehow, they think that our truth is fractured. And a united church A united church that stands on the ground of the gospel presents something greater about the gospel to a watching world. Now, I'm not saying that all denominational lines should be absolved. No, we are where we are and we're good. I think there are some denominations of people that I will see in heaven and love them, but could not minister alongside of them. And that's totally fine. But where we can and where we should, we should try to find ourselves united for the gospel, doing gospel work as Christians. Sometimes we talk about that as the church militant. You ever heard that term before? The difference between the church militant on this earth, those of us who are at war trying to take space for the kingdom, versus the church triumphant, already received their crown, already in glory with the Lord, can no longer be in the battle trying to be taking space here. The church militant needs to come together at times to show something of that unity. You do that, of course, by counting others more significantly than yourselves. How do you do that? Let me

just run through a quick, like if you're thinking about someone, even in this congregation, or a neighbor that you know is a Christian, or someone who's a family member that you've got conflict with, and it's like, no, I earnestly hold my position. And they earnestly hold their position. How do we navigate towards a middle? How do we navigate in a way that counts the other more significant than myself? Well, first, it's a recognition that compromise is usually a path towards mutual dissatisfaction. The idea that you are going to compromise in such a way that both people are completely satisfied, or more importantly for most of us in our own minds, that I'm completely satisfied and justified and honored as being the one that was actually right, is very low. And instead, we need to take the sacrificial road that says, okay, brother or sister, I'm going to uphold you and I'm going to assume that you have something correct in what you're saying. In fact, more than me. And so I want to be A, the first to listen. He who speaks before he listens, it's his folly and shame. That's what Proverbs tells us. So we make sure that we listen. We hear for certain elements. First off, we're listening for any sort of hurt, fear, anger that's coming from our brother or sister. Oftentimes it's those things that really give the energy behind conflict. And we try to listen to it compassionately that points to the cross. What is your fear that is sustained by Christ that he can ameliorate? What is your hurt that only the great physician can give you bandage for? What are you angry about that only the gospel can douse water on and help to quench? Not in a way that's rebuking, but in a kind shepherding way. I'm listening compassionately. And then I'm trying to evaluate what they say honestly and earnestly based on gospel truths. Again, assuming, mining for where they're right and where I've been blind and wrong. How are they bringing something of the gospel to this conversation that I just haven't seen yet? And then hopefully, through that, you'll get to a place where you'll be able to come to that mutually dissatisfying compromise where there is gospel unity. Brother or sister, this is where I've offended you. I am sorry. It has not been my goal. It's not been my desire to offend. I've tried to do the right thing, and maybe I've fallen off on one side or the other to the degree that I have. I am responsible. I always tell people, about ministry in general, but also about counseling. Anything I get right, it's a reflection of the Lord. Anything I get wrong is a reflection of Josh. And I get a lot of things wrong. Not because I'm trying, but because I'm a fallen sinner. I'm finite. I have context and I have a personality and sometimes that leads me down wrong paths. So I am sorry. Any way in which I got this wrong, forgive me dear brother or sister. That was not my intention. Now let's find a way where we can link arms for the gospel. Because I've been made your brother or your sister, who both of us have an elder brother, who will give us all things, not because we deserve it, but because he loved us when we stood in rebellion against him. Out of something like that, let's find a place where you and I can stand together and pull forward on the same team. Fellow, yoke fellows working together. That's what Paul seems to be saying. So a call to unity. That's the first outworking of the consider other people. more significant than yourself. The second about putting those gospel blinders on and thinking about the Lord is this peace theme. There's a call here in this first paragraph to the peace of God. And then in that next one, the God of peace. So the peace of God. This seems to be more reactive. He's trying to tell you what to do if you're in a place like you have anxiety. How it is that you navigate towards healthy Christ-like emotions and experience. The first thing, the very first element in that is the same element, the same key he's been hammering again and again and again. We've already seen it

at least four times. What is it? Joy. Joy. That the Christian life should be a life of joy. At every turn in this letter, Paul has mentioned this. If for whatever reason for you, the Christian life has become a life that's overly dour and serious and angry, brother or sister, you may not truly know the gospel. A gospel that tells you you are more wretched than you could ever imagine. And you sin in thought and word and deed every single day. And every single time you sin, you deserve wrath. And that wrath looks like casting you out, away from any fellowship with God or anyone else. Anger and loneliness, 100%. And instead, not because you did anything, but because God loved you, you get perfect fellowship in a place of perfect peace, where every single need you have ever had will be fully and completely met. And you can't bring anything, nothing to deserve that. Only because someone loved you and was willing to die for you. It's not even just a simple snapping of the fingers, waving of a wand. It took God himself in flesh and dying for you. If that doesn't cause joy, that that is where I am, that's my estate, no matter what else happens all around here. No matter what's going on in my neighborhood or in my school, no matter what's going on at work, no matter what's going on in the larger political landscape, that can never be taken from me. Where I'm headed and what it gives me is mine. And that is the place of joy. Do you want to be a good Christian apologist? Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever thought like, I want to be a good Christian apologist. I want to be somebody that helps a watching world, especially a secular world, to know the truth of the gospel. You know what the first thing you can do is? Be joyful. Joy is like a magnet. Isn't that so often what draws you and I away from the gospel? Is that somebody has something that they say will either bring you joy or their joy is evident and it makes you begin to say, huh, I wonder what's over there. There's a way in which joy just sucks us in when we see it. And as Christians, we should be oozing joy. If you wanna be a good Christian apologist, be a joyful Christian. That's your number one step. According to Paul, not me, Paul, how often has he told you to rejoice? And he even says it twice here. Rejoice in the Lord. How often? Sometimes. Oh, just when you feel it. Just on Sundays. Only when you get special occasions. If you get the job you want, if you're in the neighborhood you want, if you get the promotion or the girl or whatever it is, then rejoice. No. Rejoice always. That's a command. Always be one exuding joy. First step towards peace, always pushing towards joy. Second, let your reasonableness be known to everyone. You might have a note in your Bible next to reasonableness that says gentleness like this. This word has a, to be technical for a second, it has a semantic range, a range that that word can mean. I can use the word right in multiple ways. I could use the worst sentence in the history of sentences and say it is right to turn right right now. No one would utter that sentence. And I use the word right in three ways, and your brain didn't go, what? No, it knew, it kept up and knew that three different things were being communicated. Same way with this word. Sometimes it means reasonableness, how we relate to others. We're not being harsh, right? And that we're taking things in in a way that's logical, in a way that's measured, Or maybe it means gentle, a place of safety, a place of security. I think Paul probably has an eye towards both, but if I had to come on one side or the other, Given what he's just said about some of the conflict, I think what he's talking about is he's talking about a reasonableness where you and I are able to think through things well, not in a disagreeable way, in a kind way, in a way that listens to reason and makes reasonable decisions. Oftentimes, that requires time and structure, i.e. Presbyterianism. when people used to come through my inquirer's

class. I would say about half the people that were joining, it was the first time they'd ever been Presbyterian. They hear the preaching of someone like Derek Thomas or Ralph Davis or now Neil or Gabe back then, and they go, ooh, that's where I wanna be. They know, their soul knows that's where they need to be in order to hear God's word, but they can't spell Presbyterian, let alone ever been one before. And so my little tagline for them was, if C-SPAN is too exciting for you, Presbyterianism. If you ever watched C-SPAN and said, man, I really like that, but it's moving way too fast. Presbyterianism works. I make fun of us, but there's a sense in which, like having structure and time helps us get to good decisions. It is reasonable in how we do it. When I first got here, I came from an intern program. And so I wanted us to do an intern program because it had worked so well in my life. It took us five years to get there. I didn't hear a single no. But what we came out with on the other side was a better program than I could have ever imagined. That's the reasonableness to which Paul is calling us to be. Not rash. In our society right now, they want you to be rash. In a sense, they want you to be scandalized all the time, reactive all the time. There's even a neurobiological way in which this plays out for you. You get this little dopamine hit every time there's something that's sensational. requires just a little bit of moral outrage, right? And it becomes addictive to have that. And Paul is saying, no, no, no, no. We're not those who are gonna act rash. We're those who are gonna act reasonable. And why? The Lord is at hand. This is an interesting statement from Paul. It can mean, just like the reasonableness thing had multiple meanings, at hand or near can have multiple meanings. I'm just gonna hit them real quick and tell you which one I think, but also I'm open to being, I'm open to the Lord showing me that I was wrong. I always leave that open. The Lord can make me wiser tomorrow than I was today. How about that? So it can mean one of three things. It can be near in the sense of time. In other words, when you look at redemptive history, we're near the last day. There's only one event left to come, and that's Jesus's return. And that return, we don't know when it will happen. And because we're in that last frame before it's all over, he is near. You only have one opportunity. in this mortal life to do all for the gospel that you can, and you never know when Jesus is going to return. That's what Paul may be saying, okay? Or he might be near in the sense of location. You have the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ. He is in you, and you have access to all the resources of Christ through the Spirit of Christ. Therefore, what do you have to be anxious about? Why not be reasonable? You've got access to the mind of Christ. He's right there. All you need to do is pray and ask his spirit to minister to your spirit, which his spirit lives inside your spirit, that you might look more like him. Don't forget the resources you have in your life. He is near to you. Even right now, believer, Jesus isn't just on a throne at the right hand of the Father. Yes, he is, but his spirit is alive and active in your soul all the time if you have faith in Jesus Christ. There's never a time you're alone. There's never a time where you are cut off from those resources. They are with you all the time. So maybe that's what Paul is saying. Or maybe he's saying relationship In Corinthians, he says that the Gentiles were once far off, but through Christ, he has made them near. And by near, he means now you're part of the covenant relationship. And in that sense, it's kind of how you and I would say something is near and dear to us. You are now near and dear to Christ. There's an affection that you get with Christ. So therefore reflect somebody who has that sort of affection from God himself. Not as someone who has to go and mark out your own value by being heard, by not being reasonable, by not having joy. I tend to go

with the second of those three, to be honest with you. But commentators are all over the place. And I think all three of them communicate a common idea, which is that Christ has given you what you need in order that you might have peace. You don't need to go find it anywhere else. You don't need to go find it in a job. You don't need to go find it in a piece of tech. You don't need to go find it in a house. You don't need to go find it in another person. You have Christ and Christ is all you need in order to do what he is calling to you to do here. Then, we have that phrase that again, I think I said this a few weeks ago, it's meant to be freedom and yet it anchors some of you guys' souls nearly unbearably. Do not be anxious about anything. This is supposed to be a call that you can get out of anxiety and instead you are so tender conscience that you're thinking, oh no, I'm anxious about something. And now I'm anxious about being anxious. It's just anxiety on top of anxiety. Satan loves to do that, by the way. Remember we were talking last week about Satan's playbook and you needing to know Satan's playbook? This is one of his favorite tricks, is to take God's word and to just re-language it in your heart and mind so that instead of being freedom, instead of being safety, it just causes you to get upset. Uh-oh, what does this mean about me? No, no, no. This is the ability. You no longer have to be anxious. When Paul uses this word, he's already used it a couple of times in the letter. If you remember, it was the commending attribute of Timothy. I have no one like him caring about you. That's the same word, caring, anxious about you. There's a Greek philosopher that when he uses this word, he uses it about a hound and its quarry. That level of, like, focus. Mellie and I, when we first got married, we bought a dog a couple months after we were married. You know, couples do that. It's kind of like kids in training. You buy a pet first to see how well you do there. As if any couple has ever said, yeah, we didn't do so well, so we're just not going to have kids. You go and you get a pet. And so we got a great day because I wanted a big, lazy dog. and we got a big energetic dog instead. And you can't have a dog that you know is going to end up being close to 100 pounds or over and not take them to obedience school. Because you don't need them careening around the house like knocking children over or breaking someone's hip or whatever. Like you need them when you say stay to stay and sit and all of that. So once you got about six months old, We started taking her to this obedient school, which is really training the owners, not the dog. And so you had to do all of these exercises. And one of the exercises kind of towards the end of the school, you were kind of building up and building up and building up, you know, hey, put a little treat down and tell them to stay and you see and like, okay, go and then they get it, you know. One was you got a toy and you put it in your hand. And you had to hold the toy and kind of just mess with the toy for at least two minutes while they just sat and looked before you could release them. You'd been working up from 30 seconds to a minute to a minute and a half, and now it's two minutes. Ultimately, we're trying to get to two and a half minutes, right? So I've got this tennis ball, which was Maggie's favorite, and I'm just playing with it in my hand, except the TV was on. Back when we had something called broadcast television, and I was watching ESPN. I don't know. You know, something on ESPN was interesting. I'm sure it was a playoff of some sort, or it was, who knows what it was. But I've got this ball, and I'm doing with this, and then all of a sudden, I'm just watching the television. And then I recognize it's been 15 minutes that I've been watching ESPN, and I completely zoned out, and I've been playing with this ball, and I look down, and Maggie's just, Never lost sight of it. Right? Didn't get bored. Didn't go anywhere else. That's your anxiety. You can

just latch on to something and it won't let go. It'll just be the focus of your heart. Maybe it's money. Maybe it's relationship. Maybe it's power. Maybe it's your standing with someone or some group. Who knows? But it tells you if you don't get this, you'll never be valuable, you'll never be happy, and you'll never be safe. And what Paul is saying is, brother or sister, you have all the freedom in the world to just stop watching that ball. Instead, to turn your gaze and to focus on Christ and to see what He gives you and what He gives you is so much better than anything you could think or imagine. It's not meant to be a whip or a cudgel. Why are you still anxious? It's an invitation. You don't have to be. Just look at Christ. So what do you do? How do you do that? Well, he tells you right here. You pray. You pray. You take your whatever it is you're concerned about and you bring it to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. You know, there's something beautiful about thanksgiving. It rewires our hearts and our brains. Whenever we're thankful for things. But one of the only things that they have found that can actually begin to change, when I say they, I mean, you know, psychological and social science researchers, change what they call a happiness set point. Happiness set point is like our general happiness, right? You know, some people, they're just happy all the time, no matter what. And some people, if you see a smile on their face, it's like something really good must have just happened to you. And so there's a set point, and they have found that nothing can really change that set point. One of the earliest research studies they did was looking at people who had won the lottery in excess of a million dollars. If you think that winning more than a million dollars in the lottery will make you happy, you are wrong. It just brings a whole bunch of other problems with it. That's all it does. And so people, their happiness immediately when they found out they had won, yay, but then within like three to four months, it was just back to where it was before. If you were genuinely or generally a happy person, you were gonna generally be a happy person afterwards. If you're generally a curmudgeon, you're gonna be a curmudgeon afterwards. But that's not what we're called to. And so how do you change? And the only thing they've really found, the only thing is something called a gratitude journal. We would just call this being thankful. This is what Paul is telling us to do day by day in prayer. But a gratitude journal, where you actually write out the things you're thankful for. And here's the thing, you're not allowed to repeat yourself. Not in that month. You're gonna run out after about day five. Thank you for my spouse, and thank you for my kids, and thank you for my house, and thank you for my car, and thank you for my job. Thank you for my church. You're done. And what this does is it forces you to find the things in your life that you can be thankful for, even the little things. And all of a sudden, it actually begins to rewire some of the native thinking habits that you have ingrained. And it can change that set point. Paul, imagine this 2,000 years before this research was done, is telling you that if you pray with thanksgiving, it has a tendency to chop at that anxiety. No matter how small or insignificant it may seem, to be genuinely thankful at all. And if you think you don't have anything to be thankful for, it's because you don't yet get the gospel of grace. If you have Jesus, you have everything. If you don't have Jesus, you have nothing. That's it. You don't have to go mining for all the things to be thankful for. His name is Christ, and He has died for you, that you might be perfectly blessed and live with Him forever. So you have something for which to be thankful for. So if you have a question, you've got something on your heart, something you're concerned about, you take that to prayer, supplication, but you also make sure that you give thanks. And these two things,

when done together and done regularly, seem to affect your soul in such a way that you have access to a peace that surpasses your ability to cognitively work out. Because if you could cognitively work it out, you're not actually trusting God, you're trusting yourself. You're leaning into your own desire for control. Versus again and again through prayer, trusting the Lord and learning how to lean on him for his sovereignty. Haven't you ever met someone who's able to do that? Even through really dire circumstances, they're just able to cast their cares upon the Lord. Not in a way that makes it seem like they're just obscuring the fact they're going through something difficult, but in a way that seems to give them a sense of peace that they can't describe to you fully, but you know and they know is there. I remember the first time I had to walk someone through a terminal diagnosis of cancer. If I talk about it too much, I'll tear up right now. Loved this woman dearly. She was a kind, good saint. And what it meant when she made the decision that no more treatments were available or needed. And when she came in here to pick out the hymns for her own funeral, and the text and then seeing her in hospice for the last time and every step of the way she said, I know who I trust. I don't need a pep talk. I know the Lord is with me. I know where I'm going and I'm tired and I'm ready to get there. There is a peace that no thought process, no cognitive process could guarantee you or get you to. It's the Spirit of Christ at work and His ability to be drawn to the brokenhearted and those that are concerned and worried and full of care. and to give them peace, a peace that surpasses understanding. Now, lastly, and we'll kind of go quickly through here. It's not just peace and a peace from God, but it's the God of peace. And what Paul wants to emphasize here is your obedience. Let's look at verse eight and we'll get to verse nine. Verse eight is actually a beautiful verse. He sets this up in a very Hebraic way. The Psalms and Proverbs, Hebrew poetry, has a tendency to put things in fours, kind of two by twos, so that you know it's complete and inescapable. That's what it's trying to communicate to you. And Paul has given you this incredible description of what you're to think of. Whatever's true, whatever's honorable, whatever's just, whatever's pure, whatever's lovely, whatever's commendable. It's like he's given you that two by two, that four, but he's given you a ceiling and a floor to go with it. Where does he get this list from? What is this? Well, it's just a list of virtues, a list of good things. And there are people out there who think, oh, well, this is like a pagan list of virtues. Because a number of these, it's the only time Paul ever uses them. For example, lovely, commendable, and excellence, in that form, it's the only time you ever see it in Paul. The first two, lovely and commendable, you don't see those two words in the New Testament anywhere else. Only here. And so the question is like, OK, where's he getting this list? And some people will say, oh, well, it must just be this like pagan list. that the Philippians were familiar with through earlier Greek philosophy, even though we can't find that list anywhere, but it must have existed. And all that Paul is doing is he's just like recovering that list and trying to use it. Maybe, but probably not. Paul is just trying to communicate to you this sense of goodness. What do you steep your mind on? And the answer is for most of us, when asked, where do we go? Where do we steep our mind when it's not focused on anything else? And our answer is ourselves. My own glory, my own happiness, my own security, my own wealth, my own joy. And Paul is telling you, get your eyes out of yourself. Look around and see all the wonderfulness that God has made. It's almost like a Psalm 19 sort of thing. Heavens declare your handiwork. There's a way to look at what the older generations would have called the transcendentals. The transcendentals. Those



things that transcend any ability for humans to just describe or come up with on their own, they point to the Lord. Namely, the good, the true, and the beautiful. that any sense that we have of any of those three things have to point up to a creator, because those three things don't make sense without a person creator who gives those things meaning. By the way, it's one of the reasons why art is so effective at communicating to your soul, because it can do all three at once. And Paul's just saying, look at those things. Steep your mind on those things in the Lord, whatever is true, whatever is just, not justice, but right. What is morally right? Steep your mind in those things. And you may be telling me, Josh, I don't know how to do that. Well, first off, get off social media. And I say that only half-joking. There's a guy, Jonathan Haidt, who wrote the book, or co-wrote the book, Coddling of the American Mind. He has a new book out, and in it he has an entire chapter on religious feeling, how we're designed, it seems to be that way. Keep in mind, he's an abject atheist. And he says, it seems to be that we're designed or we have some component in us that needs these feelings. And what these feelings, if we look across the religions, what we find is, is they make us focus on others, do it in community, and take our needs to a higher power. Duh. That's exactly what Paul is telling you here. But instead, social media says, Focus on yourself, do it in isolation, and take all of your frustrations to everyone, no matter what. The name of that book, by the way, is The Anxious Generation. Because what he has found is social media, as it goes in the opposite direction, the exact opposite direction of what Paul is calling you to here, leads to what? Anxiety. And there's an entire generation of people being grown, raised with this anxiety always. Because social media is shaping their hearts. So you say, I don't know, I don't know what to do, Josh. I don't know how to steep my soul on all this stuff. Okay, get off of social media for a little while. Secondly, find something like a scripture or a hymn, something that you can just meditate on. that's good for your soul. The closer it is to God's word, the better, because that's food and nourishment for your soul. And then as you go to take some time meditating, this isn't an Eastern mystic thing. The Eastern mysticism version of meditation is you're supposed to clear your mind and think about nothing. I don't even understand that. Instead, put yourself in cognitive timeout. You're over there, buddy. I'm not even thinking about you. I'm thinking about everyone else and the Lord. And I'm thinking about everyone else in relation to the Lord. Take time. Do that. See what happens to your mental health and to your soul. as you go to implement that. Now, just to be clear, I'm not anti-medicine and those sort of things. Anyone who's come to see me, you will know I'm not anti-medicine. I believe in medicine. What I am anti is medicine only, as if that can solve all your problems. That can help you. That can give you a step up and a step out, but what you need is your soul being refreshed by the word and focused on the Lord, not yourself. If you're struggling with anxiety and depression, it may be a sign that you have decided to focus too much inward and not enough upward and outward. And Paul's telling you, steep your soul, your thoughts on these things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence. By the way, notice, He says, if there is anything excellent, if there is anything praiseworthy, it's not like this is just the only list. He then gives you a wrapper. If anything falls into these categories, think about it. Because he knows that he can't give you the end-all be-all list. But then, most importantly, what you have learned and received and heard and seen, again notice that two by two, that four, It's not that these things are different. It's just reinforcing the same truth. What you've learned, received, heard, and

seen in me, practice. The Christian life is a life of practice. It doesn't just come to you. No matter how old you are, how long you've been doing it, you need practice. You need to do it again and again and again. One of the most frustrating things I'm sure for David Henderson is that I don't ever practice any of the things he tells me to do on the golf course. I only play once every three years. But it's the same, he has to tell me the same thing over and over again. I don't ever actually make it any further because I don't practice at all. If you're not practicing these things, right? And this is the imitation game. He's been hitting you with this again and again and again. Hey, there are people who have done this in front of you and you should be doing it in front of others. Watch them and do it like them. You've seen it in me. Do it. Don't just have this mystical feeling that somehow you're supposed to know how to meditate and just know how to be restored. It takes time. It's a skill. Find people who are doing it well, who know how to do it. Learn from them and implement in your life. And then when you fail, because you will, And this is why the first three chapters of Philippians precede chapter four. When you fail, run to Christ in faith. Don't just white knuckle it. Go to him. Lord, I've done it again. I've tried to be like you and I've tried to focus on you and I've tried to put those gospel blinders on. And my heart has gone off the rails again. I find myself gripped with anxiety again. Anger again. Frustration again. It's hard for me to find joy again. I find myself in a state of disunity again. And you run to him. He says, I know. And I love you. And I've died for that. Now, go out there and try again. May your watching world see us as a unified, joyful, not anxious, peaceful reflection of the God of peace. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you again for your word. Thank you that you give us a route out from our own selfishness and self-centeredness that we each do struggle with, Lord. And thank you that you give us a reason to rejoice in a full measure. Lord, we ask that through words like this, words that can be convicting, that you would bring comfort by your grace, exhortation that we might go out and live lives reflective of your character and your gospel a little more, and commendation that we would feel your pleasure upon us when we go and we live lives that reflect our Lord and Savior. Do it all for his sake that he may get all the glory and honor. We love you and pray this in your son's name, amen.