

"With Thanksgiving!"

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. Philippians 4:5–7



Rev. Tracy McConnell

One of my favorite thanksgiving verses is tucked away in Phil. 4:1-9. The Philippian Christians were experiencing significant trouble from their pagan neighbors due to the lingering effects of the riots that came from Paul casting out the spirit of divination from the slave girl (Phil. 1:27-30; Acts 16:16-24). They were also being pressured by the Judaizers who were teaching them they had to follow the law to be saved (Phil. 3:2-3; Acts 15:1). This is why Paul ended his letter by challenging them to stand firm in the Lord, or as Spiros Zodhiates wrote, "being steadfast in the faith and profession of Christ"[1] (Phil. 4:1). Paul went on to list six areas where Christians need to stand firm.

The first is by addressing conflict in the church. When Paul wrote about the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche, it was significant enough for him to hear about in Rome, and serious enough that he believed it wouldn't be resolved before they received his reply. It was probably a competing-desires conflict—his pattern was to give the details of sin and authority/submission issues when he named the people involved—but it still disrupted the church. Paul's solution was simple: to set aside their differences and "agree in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2) and get help from his "true companion" to resolve their conflict (Matt. 5:9). When we're faced with a competing-desires conflict in the church, we have the same obligations: to set aside our differences and "agree in the Lord," and help each other resolve our conflicts.

The second is by rejoicing in difficult circumstances. When Paul commanded the Philippian Christians to "Rejoice in the Lord always," literally in "every when" (Strong's), he made doubly sure they understood by saying, "Again I will say, rejoice." (Phil. 4:4). There was no one better qualified than Paul to make this extraordinary demand. He and Silas demonstrated it when they were praying and singing hymns to God after being beaten and put in jail for casting out the demon in Acts 16:25. Like Paul and Silas, and the Philippian Christians, we will face troubles. But we also have the same good God they did, and if we focus on His goodness instead of our difficult circumstances, it will help us keep things in perspective so we can rejoice despite our circumstances.

The third is by being reasonable in difficult circumstances. Reasonableness is "behavior that is fitting, appropriate, proper, lenient, yielding, and unassertive."[2] And it isn't just with reasonable people. It should "be known to everyone (Phil. 4:5a)." The truth is, the more difficult the circumstances, the easier it is to become unreasonable. But when we're reasonable in the most difficult circumstances, even with unreasonable people, the light of Christ's love shines brightest in and through us.

The fourth is by going to God with our troubles. Paul's statement that "The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5b) reminds us that even in the most difficult circumstances, when we feel alone, God is ready and waiting to help.[3] The picture that comes to mind is a loving parent teaching their child to ride a bike: first holding on, then running behind, but never so far away that they can't step in at a moment's notice to grab hold. Then Paul challenged them not to be anxious about anything (Phil. 4:6a). Paul's use of the present tense, which describes an ongoing, repeated action rather than a single event, shows he isn't saying we can never be anxious or troubled.[4] He's saying we shouldn't stay focused on our troubles. Instead, we should call out to God through prayers for ourselves or on behalf of others[5] with thanksgiving, and make our requests known to Him (Phil. 4:6b). Then, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our heart and mind like soldiers guarding a city against enemies,[6] in Christ Jesus. I must confess that for years I brought my requests to God without finding peace, always wondering why. But then one day, while reading Phil. 4:6, I realized I was leaving out an essential ingredient: "with thanksgiving." Now, whenever I feel anxious, I pray for my needs and then thank God for everything I can think of until His peace washes over me. When we thank God for who He is and for the good things He's done for us in the past, it reassures us that He will be and do good for us in the future. For those whose trauma or physiological issues keep them bound by anxiety, God's peace comes through the love of Christians as they fulfill their responsibility to uphold them in their weakness (1Thess. 5:14).

The fifth is by filling our minds with all that is good and holy (vs. 9), and the sixth is practicing the Christian life we've learned in the church and know from the Bible (vs. 10). Paul ended by promising that "the God of peace will be with you."

As you eat turkey and all the trimmings this year, consider that thanksgiving is more than just a day when we take time to give thanks. It's one of the essential spiritual weapons God has given you to help you stand firm in your faith and profession in Christ. Now that's something to be thankful for!

[1-7] Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

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*NOTE: BIBLE RELATED MINISTRIES was launched in 1974 and is dedicated primarily to the task of going to the aid of churches undergoing internal strife. Names of such churches are confidential and revealed ONLY to the Board of BRM and NOT to the public.



Pumpkin Cheesecake Lasagna

2 cups cream cheese, room temperature
2 pckgs instant vanilla pudding, 3.4 oz each
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup heavy cream, kept cold
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 cups whole milk
1 cup pumpkin puree
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
12 graham crackers, whole, then divided
1/2 cup caramel sauce, divided
1/2 cup pecan, chopped, for garnish

In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar using an electric hand mixer until smooth, about 1 minute. Add heavy cream and vanilla and beat until medium peaks form, about 1 minute. Set aside.

In a separate large bowl, beat milk, pumpkin puree, pudding mix and pumpkin pie spice using an electric hand mixer, until combined, about 1 minute.

Spread a thin layer of cream cheese mixture in the bottom of 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with a layer of 6 graham crackers. Spread half the pudding mixture evenly over the graham crackers. Top with half of the cream cheese mixture. Drizzle with half of the caramel. Repeat with remaining pudding mixture and graham crackers, ending with a layer of the cream cheese mixture.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Drizzle with remaining caramel, and garnish with pecans. Slice and serve.

https://www.usdairy.com/recipes/pumpkin-cheesecake-lasagna-dessert-recipe

Making Thanksgiving Meaningful

Invite a friend.

Save a seat or two for someone who might need to share in that loving kindness this year.

Make food an avenue for fellowship.

Divide the menu to divvy up the work. This will provide an opportunity for family members and friends to share about their dishes

Share your heart.

Try using a simple conversation starter to focus on gratitude. Have each person go around the table and name something they are thankful for in various categories

Thank our God.

Invite each person to offer his or her own thanks to the Giver of all.

www.familylife.com/

Answer: Their feet

Leave a legacy for your family & favorite ministries. When planning a legacy, give Terry L. Balko a call at 404-229-1645 or email Mr. Balko for forms and details at terrylbalko@gmail.com. **Don't let your hard earned life-savings go into a probate bureaucracy! NOT PLANNING is a plan, but it is NOT a very good plan!**

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Bible Related Ministries Newsletter

Fernando Garza, Interim Director



2026

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body, and be thankful" – Colossians 3:15

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BRM Interims and Associates Engaged in Ministry:

>Rev. Steve Barack, BRM Associate – Interim Pastor Village Baptist Church, Lake Village, IN

>Dr. Al Carson, Sr., BRM Associate – Sr. Pastor of Edwards Corners Bible Church, Marcellus, MI

>Dr. Joe Stewart, BRM Associate – Sr. Pastor of Grace Bible Church, Dallas City, IL

>Rev. Darwyn Hassert, BRM Associate – Smyrna Bible Church (and vicinity), MI, preaches and assists as needed in nearby areas

>Rev. Don Zimmerman, Completed his interim assignment

>Rev. Tracy B McConnell, BRM Associate – Newsletter Publication

Why Is Thanksgiving Celebrated with Turkey?

Turkey became the traditional Thanksgiving centerpiece because it was once a rare, expensive treat (costing a full day's wages for an 8- to 10-pound bird in the 1830s) and large enough to feed a crowd, a status it retained long enough to be eaten in foil packets as the first meal on the Moon by Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin.

Thanksgiving Riddle:
When the Pilgrims walked off their boat into the New World, on what did they stand? (The answer is under: Making Thanksgiving Meaningful)
The Old Farmers 2025 Almanac

BRM Field Report #11

We've heard from several of our area churches looking for Pastors over the last few months:

- Grace Bible Church, in Berwyn, Illinois
- Nortonville Gospel Chapel, Spring Lake, Michigan (Chuck Svoboda church plant)
- Oak Lawn Bible Church, Oak Lawn, Illinois
- Portage bible Church, Portage, Indiana
- Village Baptist Church, Lake Village, Indiana

Please continue to pray for God's leading as they search for qualified, godly men to take up the ministries of these churches.

Please pray for Grace Bible Church in New Jersey as they have found a man to do pulpit supply and have a possible candidate.

LaGrange Bible Church is having their Missions Conference November 13-15th. Parker Road Bible Church is having their Missions Conference November 14-15. Please pray for these ministries and stop by for their focus on missions.

BRM is here for you! As we wait on God to provide BRM with a new Executive Director, Fernando Garza (BRM Interim Director), along with Dolores and the BRM Associates, are working together to fulfill BRM's mission. The phone lines are open and manned. Don't hesitate to call with any questions, needs, concerns, or issues.

Please continue to pray for BRM:

1. For God to provide a new Executive Director
2. For God's wisdom and guidance for the BRM Board