

*A ONE-DAY RETREAT FOR THE ANXIOUS, TIRED,  
AND BURNED-OUT*

EXPERIENCING



GOD'S PEACE



# EXPERIENCING GOD'S PEACE

It's a big deal that you're taking a day to process your worries with God. We hope this can be just the start of a regular rhythm of experiencing his peace in your ordinary life. If you can, head to a nearby retreat center or monastery. Retreating at home works great too, if you can turn off your devices and experience the day uninterrupted. Plan ahead for snacks and lunch, unless you decide to fast. For the best experience, print this guide, use a physical Bible, and a notebook.

First, take the Worry Inventory at the end of this guide. There's a place to note your top categories, which you'll reference during your retreat.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE DAY:

Today, you'll be centering yourself in Philippians 4:6-9, structuring your day around five movements: naming, thanking, encountering, turning, and resting. Begin the day by slowly reading those verses. A note of context: in this passage, Paul doesn't say, "Don't worry, just pray, and you won't have any problems." Instead, he says you'll experience God's peace, which will guard your heart and mind (v. 7), and the God of peace will be with you (v. 9). This passage comes after Paul describes surrendering: turning his back on everything he used to put his hope and pride in, to know Jesus (3:1-14). And it's followed by him saying that even if he goes hungry and owns nothing, he's learned to be content in the strength Jesus gives him (4:10-13).

During this retreat, you'll discover that God's peace doesn't come to us without continually turning to him and finding contentment in him, regardless of circumstances.

**9:00-9:30: NAMING** *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need..." (v. 6)*

As you sit with your Worry Inventory results, picture Jesus sitting with you. Notice which one or two areas of life are most concerning: mind, heart, body, relationships, faith, or material. In his presence, slowly journal (or just talk out loud!), naming everything troubling you in these areas. Remember that "what you need" isn't just the immediate solutions or "fixes," but more fundamentally to know that God is with you in your struggles. He wants to comfort you and can transform you through these circumstances (Phil. 1:6, 9-11).

**9:30-10:00: THANKING** *"...and thank him for all he has done" (v. 6).*

Here, we shift our attention from our concerns to who God is. Take this half-hour to review God's activity in your life, and thank him for who he is and what he has done for you. If you need inspiration, Psalms like 103, 104, or 107, and Ephesians 1:3-2:10 are helpful.

**10:00-12:00: ENCOUNTERING** *"Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (v. 7, emphasis added).*

This is the longest section of the retreat, and you'll spend it with Jesus. Encountering Jesus first in Scripture and then for yourself is the clearest way to experience God's peace. Choose one of these stories.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Jesus calms the storm (Matthew 14:22-36)        | - Jesus heals a blind man (Mark 10:46-52)                         |
| - Jesus heals a suffering woman (Mark 5:21-34)    | - Jesus heals a possessed man (Mark 5:1-20)                       |
| - Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4:1-30)   | - Jesus befriends the poor, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:15-21) |
| - Jesus and the rich man (Matthew 19:16-30)       | - Jesus in heaven (Revelation 21:22-7)                            |
| - Jesus and the woman caught in sin (John 8:1-11) |   |

You've got two hours, so take your time with this. Slowly read the story a few times to get familiar with it. Imagine yourself encountering Jesus as one of the characters in the story. Don't be afraid to let their words be yours, and Jesus's words to them be his words to you today. Close your eyes, and remain in that scene. During this time, you're not trying to learn or get a "takeaway," but simply experience Jesus drawing near to you. You may sense him encouraging or challenging you, have an image or metaphor come to mind, or simply feel his nearness.



# EXPERIENCING GOD'S PEACE

**12:00-12:30: EAT LUNCH**

**12:30-1:30: RELAX**

If you can, take a nap! Drank too much coffee and can't fall asleep? Feel free to take a walk, play an instrument, or do anything else that helps your mind rest (no screens allowed!)

**1:30-2:30 TURNING** “...fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (v. 8).

Here, you'll turn from the worries you began the day with and still your mind with God's truths. You may have sensed something in the encountering section, or some words from Jesus may have stuck out to you. That's a great place to start. Take this hour to journal what you're turning from and what God is turning your attention toward. It could help to write each of Paul's adjectives (true, lovely, admirable, etc.) and consider how Jesus embodies these qualities. For example, if you often feel like a disappointment, you may turn from that thought and journal, “When I'm at my lowest, Jesus, you look at me with compassion and delight.”

As this continual “turning” becomes more regular in your ordinary life, you'll find it more natural to surrender fully to Jesus, as Paul describes in chapter 3:8-11.

**2:30-4:00: RESTING** “...the God of peace will be with you” (v. 9).

To end your day, spend a few minutes reading John 14-17. Notice how Jesus talks about giving us his peace, the Holy Spirit, and how he prays for you. Paul even writes in Romans 8:34 that Jesus is *currently* pleading for you! So, take his words to heart.

After wrapping up John 17, take the rest of the day to simply enjoy Jesus's company. This Jesus, who gives you peace, who is your peace, is drawing near to you, offering you his love, delight, and provision (Isaiah 55:1-3). His Spirit is within you, praying for you, wanting to give you living water for your thirsty soul (John 4:13-14). Take him up on his offer. Take a walk, prepare dinner, sing your favorite worship song, or do anything you enjoy, with the awareness that *he is with you*, closer than any friend.

## SOME IDEAS FOR RETREATING WITH JESUS IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

- Begin and end each day with God in prayer, screen-free. Decide what time your phone will “go to bed,” and don't keep it in your room. If this is new for you, use a psalm to guide your prayer time.
- Take a few minutes around lunch for a “midday surrender.” Notice where you've sensed God so far and release the rest of the day to him.
- Was there a particular truth (Phil. 4:8) God brought your attention to? Write it down and find time to meditate on it.
- Practice Sabbath by choosing one day a week where you can turn off your phone and truly rest.
- Look forward on your calendar, and plan a monthly or quarterly retreat, to return to this sacred time with Jesus. You could even re-use this guide.
- It's easy to be consumed by worry when much of your time is spent by and for yourself. Find a friend or family member whom you can serve tangibly.
- Don't try to do this alone. Share with a friend or pastor what worries have been affecting you most, and how God is speaking to them.

*\*While we believe this experience will help you navigate your struggles throughout ordinary life, if worry seems overwhelming or out of control, we'd encourage seeking out the help of a mental health professional.*



# WORRY INVENTORY

After answering the following questions, count each time you answered “often” or “always.”  
Take note of your top two categories, as you’ll refer to them in your retreat.

## MIND

My thoughts feel racing or hard to quiet.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

My inner dialogue is anxious or self-critical.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

My beliefs about myself are negative or discouraging.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I get stuck replaying conversations or interactions with others.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I get stuck thinking about things I don’t want to think about.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

## HEART

Feelings of sadness, fear, or shame weigh heavily on me.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

Naming or expressing my emotions is difficult.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

My emotions feel overwhelming or hard to manage.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I don’t feel any emotions.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I experience pressure to “feel” a certain way when spending time with God.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

## BODY

My physical health negatively affects my well-being.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I experience shame related to my body and/or image.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I feel burdened by sexual temptation and brokenness.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I neglect rest, healthy food, or exercise in my life.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I feel antsy and jittery, not wanting to sit still.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

## RELATIONSHIPS

I feel disconnected from people I care about.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I long for deeper friendships or intimacy.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I lack a community where I am known and supported.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I don’t feel like I can be completely myself with anyone.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS

I don’t feel like I can be honest about my beliefs with others.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEVER      SOMETIMES      OFTEN      ALWAYS



# WORRY INVENTORY

After answering the following questions, count each time you answered “often” or “always.”  
Take note of your top two categories, as you’ll refer to them in your retreat.

## FAITH

Believing that God delights in me, rather than being disappointed in me, is difficult.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

Experiencing Jesus’s presence or guidance feels out of reach.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

Guilt about not doing enough spiritual practices weighs on me.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

My faith feels disconnected from my life.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

I struggle with doubt.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

## MATERIAL

Financial stress affects my sense of peace.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

Housing or job stability feels uncertain.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

I worry about whether I will have enough in the future.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

I spend more money than I want to.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

I feel insecure when I compare my lifestyle to other people’s.

○ ——— ○ ——— ○ ——— ○  
NEVER                      SOMETIMES                      OFTEN                      ALWAYS

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TOP TWO CATEGORIES

*\*This is not a professional mental health assessment. While we believe this inventory and retreat will help you identify areas of worry and experience peace, if worry feels overwhelming or out of control, we encourage you to seek the help of a mental health professional.*

