

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

27

Dearest Grandchild,

Our lesson for the day comes from the book of Philippians. This is one of Paul's letters written from prison. In spite of the fact that Paul was in chains, this letter is filled with lots of "joy" and "rejoicing".

Here is our passage for the day: **"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."** (Phil 4:4-7)

Many years ago Steve was working on a project. I think, perhaps, he was building a model airplane. At any rate, the only glue we had available at the time was Contact Cement. It was a type of glue that was new to him. At first, the glue didn't seem to work at all. But when he followed the directions it worked like magic. The directions say that once the surfaces are dry and clean you are to put the contact cement on both surfaces and wait 10 minutes for it to dry. When dry, the cement will have a clear glossy finish and be will not be sticky at all. When pressed together, however, these surfaces immediately bond and become inseparable. The late Carl Bowers built our kitchen cabinets and glued Formica on them with contact cement. After preparing both surfaces, and brushing on the cement, and letting it dry as directed. Only then did he put the Formica on. Since the two surfaces would immediately bond, he separated them with a newspaper until the Formica was positioned exactly as he wanted it. Once the paper was removed a permanent bond was established. He build these cabinets in 1965 and the Formica has not budged since.

I'm sure you have heard the oft repeated saying: "When all else fails, go by the directions". Let's apply this truth to our text for the day.

"Rejoicing" is not an emotion like "happiness". God does not command us to be happy, but He does command us to rejoice. So let's go through these instructions one step at a time.

- # 1 - Rejoice in the Lord always. Even when you don't feel like it, you can still rejoice.
- # 2 - Let your gentleness be evident. Not only is God watching, but people are watching too.
- # 3 - Don't be anxious or worry about anything. This is hard, but you can still do it.
- # 4 - Every time you have a prayer or a petition, offer those prayers with thanksgiving.
- # 5 - When you do these 4 things, the peace of God that passes understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Just try it. It works every time.

J. Paul Getty was at one time the richest man in America. He made his first million in 1916 and became a billionaire in the in the 1950s. On July 10, 1973, his grandson was kidnaped by a

mafia type group in Italy and a ransom of \$17 million was demanded. Suspecting that his drug addicted grandson was perpetuating a scam, Getty didn't pay. In November 1973, an envelope containing a lock of hair and the boy's ear was delivered to a daily newspaper. The kidnapers warned of further mutilation, and their ransom demands were reduced to \$3.2 million.

No wonder Grandpa Getty was paranoid. He had steel bars placed on all 500 windows in his mansion and purchased vicious Alsatian dogs to guard the outside. A bulletproof steel plate was imbedded in his bedroom door and weapons on his bedside table. Unsmiling guards were hired to keep the old man safe.

A similar fear gripped William Randolph Hearst. He purchased 127 acres near San Simeon, California and began building a huge castle. It had 56 bedrooms, 61 bathrooms, 19 sitting rooms, and took 28 years to build. No one who visited that castle was permitted to mention the word "death". His gardeners were so afraid of him that when a palm tree died they painted its leaves green and waited for him to leave town before they replaced it.

J. Paul Getty died. William Randolph Hearst died. The Apostle Paul also died. And if the Lord does not come while we are alive, someday we will also die. Paul was not afraid of death, and neither should we be.

Note the contrast between Paul's confidence and the fear of these unbelievers. The Greek word translated as "will guard" in our text is "phroueo." It is a military term. W. E. Vine in his Word Studies defines it as "to keep under guard, as with a garrison." It is the same word used in 2 Cor. 11:32 to describe the careful watch made by soldiers in Damascus when Aretas was seeking for Saul.

Notice how logically and beautifully this passage unfolds. If we follow the five steps listed above God will send a heavenly garrison to guard our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus.

Acts 12:1 - 19 tells a beautiful story about the peace of God keeping Peter's heart and mind. The Apostle James had just been beheaded by the wicked Herod and Peter was scheduled to also be killed the following day. Instead of cringing with fear, however, he was sleeping like a baby. Ungodly people often cannot sleep on an expensive mattress, but apparently Peter was sleeping on the floor while being chained to two soldiers. He was sleeping so soundly that the angel of God had to strike him on the side to wake him up.

So the next time you are troubled, or have something to worry about, remember this little recipe and the peace of God that passes understanding will guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce