

## RECAPTURING THE WONDER!

Scripture used: [Philippians 4:6-7 \(NIV\)](#) & [Philippians 4:8-9 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

This week Pastor Hurmon kicked off our holiday message series “Recapturing the Wonder of Christmas!” We started with Paul’s writing about anxiety because the holiday seasons can be a stressful time. We are worried about traveling safely. We are worried about family tension. We are worried about having enough money to buy presents. And we may be worried about our health, our children, or our marriage. Though there are many sources of anxiety, as followers of Jesus we can claim God’s peace and live with a spirit of wonder!

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **Anxiety keeps us from God’s blessings.** When we are anxious, life becomes nothing more than a set of routines. Nothing takes our breath away anymore. We lose sight of all the wonderful things that God has placed around us. Anxiety can keep us from forming rewarding relationships. Anxiety makes us depressed because we can’t see everything we should be grateful for. Anxiety also keeps us from being generous because we’re obsessed with not having enough for ourselves.
- 2) **God made us supernatural promises that should get rid of anxiety.** In Philippians Chapter 4, Paul explains these two promises, and why they should help reduce anxiety no matter what we’re dealing with.
  - a. **The promise of peace.** [Philippians 4:6-7 \(NIV\)](#) tells us that God’s peace will guard both our hearts and our minds. Pastor Hurmon described this as an “opening” that can even surprise us. Why? Because God’s peace will show up in even the worst situations!
  - b. **The promise of presence.** [Philippians 4:8-9 \(NLT\)](#) tells us that God will always be with us when we practice following Jesus. Pastor Humon described this as “the companionship of the divine.” God is our all-powerful and ever-present Lord!
- 3) **We must follow unnatural practices to receive God’s supernatural promises.** These promises are amazing, but there’s more to the story. Paul told us that we needed to work against our own nature. We have to fight against our natural tendencies.
  - a. **Be prayerful.** Every day should involve time spent with God. We need to communicate with him, alone and with other followers. This doesn’t have to be a lot of time, though. Pastor Hurmon recommends starting with no more than 3-5 minutes for group prayer, so it can become a habit.
  - b. **Be present.** We must slow down, be in the moment & fully immersed in “the experience” -- not obsessing about past mistakes or worrying about the future. Once we are able to be in the present, we can look around and notice all the amazing things that God has placed all around us. We are practicing this together as a church, using the qualities that Paul mentions.
    - i. **Monday = True.** What around you is authentic, trustworthy, reliable, and firm?
    - ii. **Tuesday = Honorable.** What around is worthy of respect?
    - iii. **Wednesday = Right.** What around you is just or fair? What is going well?
    - iv. **Thursday = Pure.** What around you is sacred? What are you doing right?
    - v. **Friday = Lovely.** What around you is beautiful, pleasurable, or satisfying?
    - vi. **Saturday = Admirable.** What around you is commendable, or good news?

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Do you identify as an anxious person? Does living in Silicon Valley cause you anxiety? What about the upcoming holiday season?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Pastor Hurmon is emphasizing wonder throughout this sermon series. We need to recapture wonder in our lives by slowing down, looking for wonder, and then experiencing it. Which of these is going to be the hardest for you?
- 3) **DO** - Commit to doing the week-long practice with the rest of the church, taking time to notice the specific quality each day from the list. Don’t deny challenges, but affirm positives in a spirit of gratitude. And if you haven’t already, please invite family and friends to our [Christmas Celebrations](#), which includes candlelight gatherings on Saturday December 21st at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM, plus our regular services on Sunday December 22nd at 8:30 AM, 10:15 AM, and 12:00 PM.