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Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9 NIV.Last year I taught science to three elementary girls. We studied underwater creatures God made. It was a fun and we all learned a lot of information. But, how fun it was for me, the teacher to hear that these students, when at the beach actually remembered what I taught them. There parents asked them "where did you learn this?" "Miss Martha, taught us!". These girls actually learned the subject well enough to share it with their parents. I was humbled and blessed! Philippians 4:9 has Paul encouraging all of us to not only gain information, but be able to apply it! This is quite the statement our big brother Paul wrote. I have been thinking about the difference between being taught something and actually learning it! When we actually "learn" something, it becomes a part of us. When needed, we can apply it to our lives.This past week, I faced a spiritual battle. I am sure I am not alone in this battle. It happens frequently. The "battle" challenged and tested whether I have actually "learned" to capture my thoughts, or just know the concept! So when Paul instructs us to put into practice everything we have learned, received or even heard from him—it is a lot! If we just apply his instructions in the book of Philippians, can be daunting. However, my friends, we don't have to do it alone. I am so grateful we have the Holy Spirit. He really is the teacher extra-ordinaire! Our church has been focusing on running our race, but doing it to win. As I faced this battle this week, I felt the Holy Spirit reminding me that I could win this battle. It seemed much easier to give in and let my thoughts run amuck, but I kept at it, bringing them subject and not only did freedom come, but peace prevailed. That is the promise we find in Paul's encouragement. If we give thanks for our brothers and sisters, as he did in Philippians 1: 3 (every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy....), we won't be so frustrated with them. If we believe, as he states in Philippians 1: 5, that he who began the good work with you will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns, we won't be so frustrated with ourselves. Then peace will reign in our hearts.Paul strongly exhorts us "do not be intimated in anyway by your enemies". Philippians 1:28. That is powerful advice, if we not only read it, but apply it! I don't know about you, but intimidation is anything by peaceful! Later in Philippians 4, Paul writes about two women who struggled in getting along. He asked others to help them settle there disagreement, so peace could be restored. He goes on to say in verse 6: don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace which exceeds anything we can understand. I encourage you to break this verse apart. Decide not to worry, but pray about those things which concern you. Don't stop there, take the time to thank him for what he has done, and for what he is going to do in the situation that troubles you. Peace will come.Today, I just want to remind us to allow the Holy Spirit to help you take His truths and get them past our heads and into our hearts. Everything He has us to learn is going to add to our peace. When we are at peace, we see things more clearly. Faith flows easier and we can run our race to win. Capturing unruly thoughts is one way we can walk in His peace. My friends, becoming a student of God's Word will lead to more freedom. Become not only a learner, but a doer of His Word. It is good for you and it will be good for those around you.Father, I thank you for your grace and mercy. I thank you for helping us not just know about Your truth, but apply it. Help apply everything we are learning, that we can be an example to others, in Jesus' Name, amen. |