

# The Power of Thankfulness

*“Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).*

There is so much within this formula for peace that when you put it all together it works exceedingly well. Let's break it down so we can see all the components.

## **Change your anxious thoughts into prayers to a faithful God**

We all can feel overwhelmed with life. There are so many things to worry about, so many things to be concerned about. But God gives us a prescription for peace – bring every concern and care to Him. He does not desire that we carry the weight of the world on our own shoulders.

*“‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:5-7).*

*“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).*

Jesus always lives to undertake for us. It seems silly for us to hang on to our burdens and cares and not make them a matter of prayer to a all-knowing, all-powerful, all-caring God.

God invites is to bring our needs and deficiencies to Him and trust that He will be sufficient for our need. He is God after all, and we are not. That's why humility is necessary for prayer. We have to admit that we need help. We have to admit that we can't handle life on our own. But God's attributes make Him more than qualified to deal with whatever is causing us anxiety.

Where better to cast our situation than on the One who cares and who has the means and power to bring about a solution? I can tell my troubles to a friend, but who can say whether that friend has the power or authority to remedy my situation? My God can fix my problem. Or He can comfort me and hold me steady in the waiting.

A child with responsible, stable parents does not worry about whether she will have a roof over her head, or food on the table or clothes to wear. She doesn't concern herself with who will drive her to school or wake her up in the morning. She simply trusts her parents to do those things. Her parents want her to have this trust. They do not want her to worry about the things that they have the responsibility for. So it can be with God.

Refuse to give into fear and worry. Replace those habits with faith. As you realize that you are worrying about something, deliberately bring that concern to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to keep you from worry. Ask for wisdom. Reaffirm your need for Jesus' help. This will train you to pray about everything. Nothing is too small for God to care about, and nothing is too big for Him to handle. With God all things are possible.

### **Pursue a thankful attitude**

Choosing to be thankful is key to peace.

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

Why is it God's will for you to be thankful?

An attitude of gratitude should be the normal state of an obedient Christian, regardless of circumstances and situations. You might say, “I have a lot of bad stuff going on in my life. How can I be thankful? Doesn't my life need to be going well to be thankful?”

We are not in heaven yet. Here we will have problems. But Jesus said: *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).*

**When we are ungrateful towards our circumstances what is that implying about a sovereign God? What is our underlying assumption?**

I have the right to a smooth and uncomplicated existence where God and everybody else needs to be focused on meeting my needs. God isn't doing a very good job right now to make me happy.

**Develop the habit of thanking the Lord for each little mercy...**

**Develop the habit of beginning and ending each day with gratitude.**

*“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night, on an instrument of ten strings, On the lute, And on the harp, With harmonious sound. For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands” (Psalm 92:1-4).*

*“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving...” (Colossians 4:2).*

As we grow in our thankfulness to God, we will also grow in our thankfulness toward other people. When we are deliberately thankful to people, we bestow grace on them. We shift our focus from being irritated with what they didn't

do to being thankful for what they did. People generally respond much better to grace than criticism.

Pursuing thankfulness changes your heart and changes your focus. We see what we are looking for. If we want to see good, we will find it. If we want to see things to complain about, we will see those. Put on your thankful eyeglasses. Your heart will become lighter.

**The payoff is peace which is beyond understanding to guard your mind**

*“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:3-4).*

Bringing our requests to God with thanksgiving will protect our peace. We do not need to look to favorable circumstances for peace. Rather we look to the sovereign rule of the Prince of Peace. God is in control. Because God is in control, He will see me through whatever circumstance I'm facing. He will be my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. God will never leave me or reject me. I am His beloved child and He has promised to care for me. So I can tell Him what I need. I can tell Him what scares me. I can tell Him that I feel overwhelmed. As I trust Him, He will give me peace. God will never mismanage my life.