

Consider  
the  
Lilies

"This book is exceptional  
in every way."  
—JOHN MACARTHUR



Finding  
Perfect Peace  
in the  
Character  
of God

Jonny  
Ardavanis

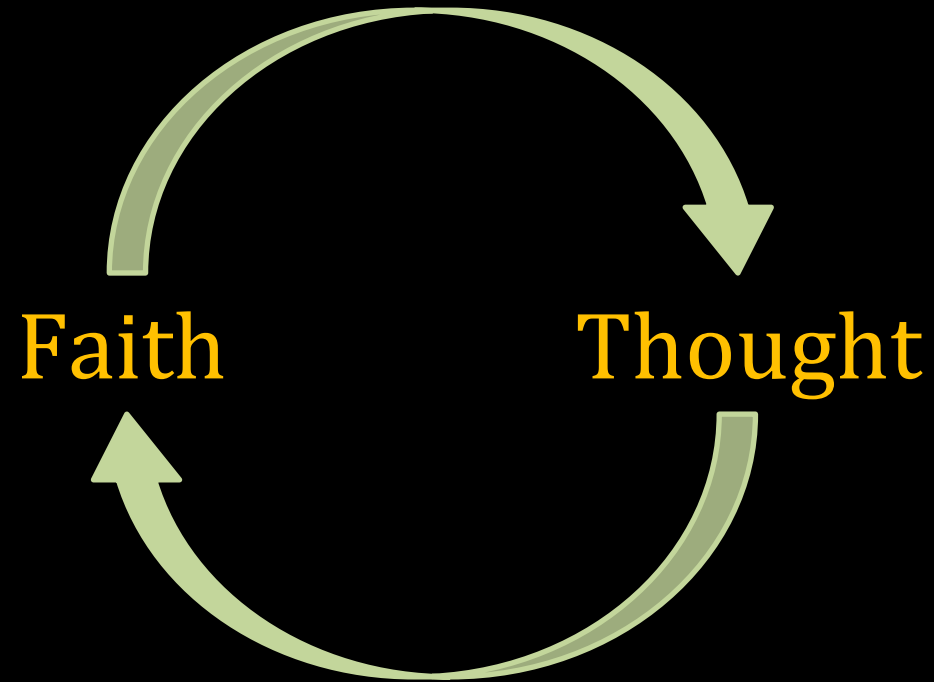
# Consider the Lilies

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## Chapter 5: *Your Mind Matters*

*“Anxiety stems from a deficient exercise of faith.” (pg. 43)*

Thought and faith tend to shape one another.



*“Whether it was accessing the back seat by crawling from the front seat (because the back doors didn’t work) or our banging on the radiator with a hammer to start the car, our relationship with ‘the Classic’ was defined by temporary fixes. These ‘remedies’ never solved the real problems but simply masked and suppressed the real issues at hand.” (pg.60)*



*“The world’s approach to the subject of worry is often akin to my family’s relationship with “the Classic.” Quick fixes to help us manage. The problem is that these “fixes” the world offers aren’t really fixes at all; they are temporary alleviations at best. Momentary distractions. But shoving worry down isn’t making it go away. Worry rarely takes a day off – it will be back tomorrow.” (pg. 60)*



Where does the world look for peace? In what ways do they pursue it?

1. By trying to change their circumstances (the Heat)
2. By turning to escapes

Matthew 6:31–32

*<sup>31</sup> “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things.”*

1 Timothy 5:8

*But if anyone does not provide for his own... he is worse than an unbeliever.*

The issue of anxiety is not a problem of Heat but a problem of the Heart.

Where does the world look for peace? In what ways do they pursue it?

1. By trying to change their circumstances (the Heat)

2. **By turning to escapes such as...**

- Media/Entertainment: television, social media, gaming, pornography, etc.
- Substances: comfort eating, alcohol, drugs, vaping, etc.
- Activities: exercise, sports, work, hobbies, gambling, shopping, etc.

*“What we yearn for is peace that endures. Our world is broken, and we are broken; therefore, the peace we long for cannot be of ourselves, it cannot be natural – it must be supernatural.” (pg. 60)*

*“Maybe you acknowledge the reality that you need God’s help... and have prayed, ‘**God, take my anxiety away**’ – which is good, as long as the prayer is conjoined to an understanding that God doesn’t simply want to remove your worry; He wants to replace your worry with trust. Praying ‘God, take away my worry’ is not the same thing as praying, ‘**God, help me trust You as I feed my mind with the truth of Your word and meditate on Your matchless character. Fix my mind and set my gaze on Your love, wisdom, and sovereignty and give me a peace that can come only from You.**’ The opposite of anxiety is not the absence thereof but the presence of something only God can provide: ‘perfect peace’ (Isaiah 26:3).” (pg. 60)*

*“Jesus gathers those who are worried about their lives; the occupation of Rome; the battle for bread; the future of their relationships, homes, and finances and tells them, ‘Do not be anxious.’ Thankfully, Jesus doesn’t stop there – He then instructs them to think on the character of our heavenly Father. Far from the shallow intellectualism that we see among many churches today, the Christian faith requires deep thinking.” (pg. 61)*

*“We are thinking creatures. Grasping this reality is crucial to our discussion, because within our minds lie **both the problem and the solution** to our anxiety.” (pg. 62)*

Romans 1:28

*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind.*

Ephesians 4:17-18

*<sup>17</sup> So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.*

*“We are thinking creatures. Grasping this reality is crucial to our discussion, because within our minds lie **both the problem and the solution** to our anxiety.” (pg. 62)*

1 Corinthians 2:14

*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*

Colossians 1:21 – *...you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind.*

1 Timothy 1:15

*To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*

*“No longer does the natural man have a bent toward God but rather a hardwiring of hostility against Him (Romans 1:21; Colossians 1:21). And what darkened minds need is the light of the revelation of God so that we might know Him. Although Christians receive a new heart at the moment of our justification (Ezekiel 36:26), our minds are continually and progressively renewed over time until we meet Jesus face-to-face. [...] It is crucial to understand that Christianity, above all other religions in the world, places a supreme value on the mind. **In every category of holiness and Christlikeness, how we grow as a Christian necessitates the stewardship and transformation of the way we think and where we set our minds.**” (pg. 62)*

## Scripture Passages that Highlight the Significance of the Christian's Mind:

Matthew 22:37

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."*

Romans 8:6

*For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.*

Romans 12:2

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

Ephesians 4:23 – *...be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*

Colossians 3:2 – *Set your mind on the things above...*

*“Bottom line: the Christian life is a battle for the mind. If you want to grow in your trust in God and experience the peace that can come only from God, then you must learn to fix your mind on Him. Consider the words of Isaiah 26:3: ‘You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in You.’*

*As your mind goes, so goes the entirety of your spiritual life. Your will and your feelings are (except in rare cases) subservient to your mind. Therefore, the sum and substance of your Christian life is what you think about. Proverbs 23:7 put it this way: ‘For as he thinks within himself, so is he.’ Small thoughts of God and shallow levels of intimacy with Him will always result in a small degree of peace and shallow levels of trust. Your stability amid the storms of life is in direct proportion to the degree that your mind is fixed on God.” (pg. 63)*

## Philippians 4:6-7

*<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*“Paul said, ‘Substitute worry with prayer, and despair with thanksgiving!’ Surely, this is much easier said than done. How can I be anxious for nothing? Paul told us how in the following verse: ‘Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things’ (Philippians 4:8).” (pg. 64)*

*“This introductory step to healing is consistent throughout Scripture: Think. Think. Think.” (pg. 64)*

*“For the follower of Christ... faith is not a once-upon-a-time thing but an everyday exercise. And to Jesus, living by faith has everything to do with where we set our gaze.” (pg. 65)*

*“When Jesus rebukes His worried followers for the littleness of their faith, He means two primary things: (1) they had a small view of who God actually was, and (2) even if they affirmed and acknowledged different elements of His character, they had failed to appropriately meditate on the truths they affirmed. Instead, they chose to dwell on the worries and anxieties that bombarded them. In turn, their faith had become “little.” (pg. 66)*

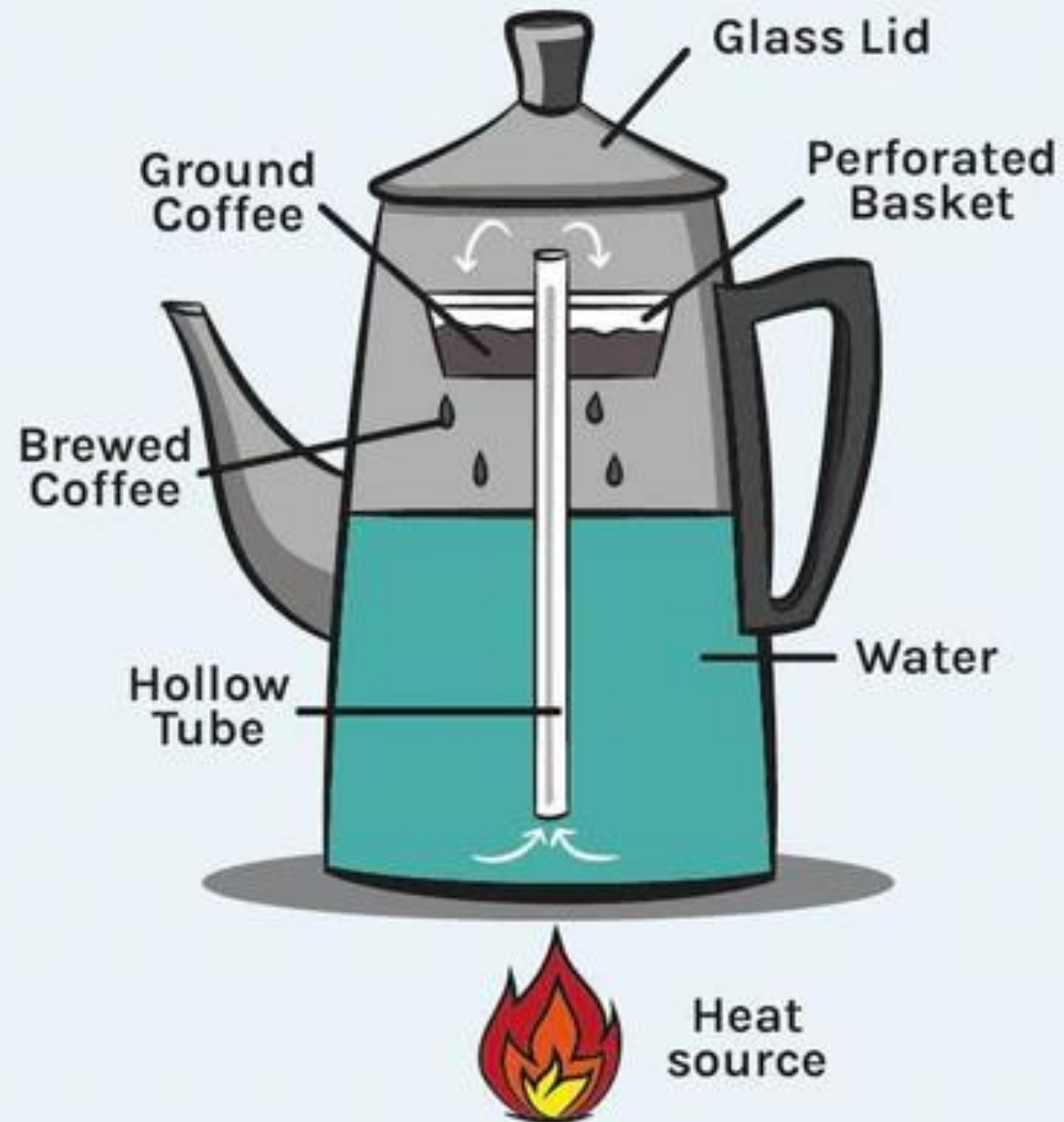
**Notitia:** knowing information about something

**Assensus:** agreeing that the information we know is true

**Fiducia:** when what we know and agree to be true transforms us

*“Meditation, according to Scripture, is a critical discipline and duty that weds doctrine and practice and integrates biblical truth to our lives. Far from meditation being and emptying of our minds, as Eastern religion instructs, meditation is a filling up of our minds with the truth found in God’s Word.” (pg. 66)*







*“Without meditation the truth of God will not stay with us; the heart is hard, and the memory slippery, and without meditation all is lost; meditation imprints and fastens a truth in the mind... As a hammer drives a nail to the head, so meditation drives a truth to the heart. **Without meditation the word preached may increase notion, not affection.**” (pg. 67)*

*“To the anxious, Jesus conveys that our worry is rooted in a deficient understanding of the nature of our heavenly Father. He is saying to you through His Word, ‘If only you really knew what God is like! Then you would understand that there is never a reason on earth for you to be worried.’*

*We too often hear and read Scripture but rarely chew and digest the truths found within it. As a result, we can confirm the existence of God’s power and sovereignty but be strangers to the experience those realities ought to produce in our hearts.” (pg. 68)*

*What are some reasons why Christians don't meditate on God's Word as we should?*

1. Time – the busyness of our lives
2. Apathy – we don't really believe we need it
3. Distractions – there are other things more appealing to our desires and our flesh that we choose to do instead

*“Over and over again in the Psalms, we read that the psalmist meditated on the Word of God, not as an academic or intellectual exercise, but as the necessary means to the desired end – knowing God.” (pg. 68)*

## The Enemy of Our Mind: Satan

### 2 Corinthians 4:4

*The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

*“He uses distraction, busyness, doubt, sin, and slothfulness to keep us from gazing at God... He does not want your mind actively engaging the truth of God; he desires that your mind be stayed upon the problems, chaos, and unknowns in this world. If not, he is perfectly content that your mind be idle. Why? Because an idle mind is the devil’s playground. **If you are not filling your mind with truth, he will find a way to fill it with lies.**” (pg. 69)*

**Next Time:** Chapters 6 & 7

*Knowing Abba*

&

*Forever Himself, Forever Good*

