

Prayer Night 7  
16, 2024

April

1. A Pattern and Place of Prayer.
2. Praise in Prayer. (Ps. 100:4)
3. Confession in Prayer. (Ps. 66, Jn. 9, Ten Commandments)
4. Praying for our Enemies. (Matt. 5)
5. Ask Anything. The True Vine Discourse (John 15)
6. Spiritual Armor and Warfare. Eph. 6
7. Be Anxious for Nothing. Phil. 4

Phil. 4:4-9 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.'

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. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

Peace and anxiety are polar opposites. Twice in this passage, Paul references peace as a spiritual state of being after proper prayer.

Paul partners the prayer with the type of prayer – 'everything in prayer' and 'whatever' is \_\_\_\_\_, "practice these things" – and the result is the peace of God.

We have talked about a lot of things in prayer but this is passage is a direct antidote to anxiety.

Am I anxious because I am fretful, fearful of my own flesh and my own desires OR Am I anxious because God's will be not being obeyed?

### **Anxiety.**

In **Old English** the word anxiety is closely linked to the word worry and that word was 'wyrge' it had a connotation to strangle or to harassment.

It is a way to strangle the life out of a person. It is a mental estate that serves to harass a person.

Nearly 7 million American adults report to be dealing with regular debilitating anxiety. The American Association of Anxiety and Depression report that women are twice as likely to have Anxiety or Depression.

15 million adults have Social Anxiety Disorder.

20 million have specific fear-based disorders that cause them anxiety.

Anxiety is a response to stress. We all have stressors; this passage states you can have two responses; You can have anxiety about the stressor OR you can pray about the stressor and the result is not anxiety but peace.

### **The 333 rule.**

In Anxiety treatment there is a technique called the 333 rule. It is the practice of identifying 3 objects, 3 sounds, and moving 3 body parts as a response to dealing with anxiety.

The National Institute of Mental Health reported that nearly 20% of the American population will have an anxiety disorder or anxiety related panic attack this year.

An estimated 31% of all American adults experience anxiety at some point in their life.

So those statistics give us a rough estimate that you have a 1 out of 5 or 3 out of 10 chance of coming in contact with a person that is living with debilitating anxiety. You have a high likelihood of having anxiety as a response to stress.

Paul had a wide-range of anxieties that all came as a response to the many stressors he had on his life.

2 Cor. 11:28 'Apart from the other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.'

Paul tells the Corinthians

1 Cor. 7:32 'I want you to be free from anxieties' – and he goes on to talk about the importance of marriage and the demands of upholding a biblical marriage.

Paul says in that passage that 'the unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.'

So you can obviously have anxieties about sinful problems of this world and you can have anxieties about honoring God with our lives but in either cast we are to take these anxieties to God in prayer.

Peter addressing anxiety.

1 Pet. 5:7 'cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you'

Anxiety can be completely debilitating. The stress of life can be so overwhelming that it can leave a person emotionally and psychologically crippled. They may very well be strong-bodied and able, but their emotional life and psychological life is not strong enough to continue.

I do want to say that it is our duty as brothers and sisters to not pull the 'grit and bear' card or the 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' card.

Any legitimate Christian will acknowledge their need to take responsibility, but when we are talking about a topic like this this is not so much as a responsibility as it is an inability.

And I mean that with the upmost of respect to the person that is impaired with these things, they are literally incapable or at least perceptively incapable of overcoming.

The person needs genuine care. They need people that care about them and the way we always care for each other spiritually is with Truth and Grace.

We need the truth of taking responsibility of our lives and the grace of realizing our abilities are not sufficient for making ends meet. We need help.

Be ready to acknowledge the struggles of human life with each other.

Prov. 12:25 'Anxiety in a man's heart weights him down, but a good word makes him glad'

In 1 Sam. 1:15-16 'Hannah replied to Eli 'No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern/anxiety and provocation/vexation. '

Even the good things given by God can become an anxiety to a person if they are not fully submitted to the obedience of God.

Ezek. 4:16 'they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and they shall drink water by measure and in dismay'

Ezek. 12:18, 19

In a time of judgement even the common graces of God become anxieties because the heart is not right with God.

Well God promises help.

**Q: What anxieties should we pray about?** All of them.

**Story at Westminster Chapel with G. Campbell Morgan.**

A lady asked Pastor Morgan after the service can I bring even small things to God in prayer. And Morgan responds, 'Ma'am when you are God nothing is either big or small.' – He wants us to take every care and every concern to Him in prayer.

The instruction in the text says pray about 'everything.' – There is not telling in our estimation what things are small or big before God.

As Jesus taught 'be faithful in the small things and you will be faithful with much.'

**About anything.**

**'Do not be anxious about anything'**

**Anxious.**

This is defined as a state of restlessness. It is the opposite of being at peace. It is on-going worries.

Jesus teaches '**do not be anxious/restless about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.**' Matt. 6:25

**In the preceding chapter, Phil. 3 Paul outlines this same thing even more so.**

**Anything. Everything. Whatever.**

In this passage Paul uses 1 negative word; Anxiety. He uses 13 positive terms; Rejoice, Reasonableness/Gentleness, thanksgiving, peace, guard, true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praiseworthy.

Comparatively this is very much likened to the Full Armor of God discourse in Ephesians 6. Paul dedicated 1 verse to the demonic world rules and an entire spiritual armory to our well-being.

Do not worry about anything. Instead, pray about Everything. And do so in whatever way is in these character traits.

What is interesting to note is that the men and women who have the most reason for worry and anxiety give us the best examples of faithfulness, joy, peace, and praise.

Consider in this passage, Paul is in Prison! The Mamertine Prison.

‘When the Lord is at hand, earthly concerns must cease. Why would anyone bother about something that is about to perish?’ Ambrosiaster, Ambrose – AD 366-384

We must be taught to live a spiritual life. Christian’s never graduate from living a life of faith.

The Christian faith requires that we live by faith.

### **Stories that cause anxiety but led to peace in God’s providence.**

The Puritan theologian **Jeremiah Burroughs** wrote a book titled, ***The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment***. He was a great pastor but during a time of church persecution he was exiled to Rotterdam in the 1630’s.

Burroughs who was an extraordinarily gifted and skilled pastor, pastored the greatest congregations in London, yet was in essence fired from the office.

After these experiences it was then that he wrote a series of essays that became known as the book *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*.

**Thomas Watson**, was ejected from his pastorate during the Great Ejection of the 1600’s. Watson has unquestionably written some of the greatest literature on the Christian faith and practice in the past 2000 years.

Watson who was ejected from being a pastor is said that when he died and left this earth, he had been in such regular peaceful prayer that he didn’t even notice the difference.

**Charles Spurgeon**, was racked with constant physical ailments, turned to cigars as a source of worldly comfort on a weekly basis. Spurgeon took a cigar as a source of Christian liberty amidst his physical trials. When DL Moody challenged him on it ‘Moody said, ‘When are you going to give up your cigar? Spurgeon responded ‘Maybe when you give up your spoon!’ Knowing that Moody was given to eating.

Spurgeon Had numerous physical ailments to overcome that were a source of discouragement, depression, and anxiety. Known as the Prince of Preachers, was eventually fired by the Baptist denomination.

**B.B. Warfield's** wife was an invalid. He had to care for her throughout his ministry. Yet, he is known as one of the top theologians in American history.

**William Carey**, the great Baptist missionary to India lost a child during his mission trip. But submitted his life to God's providence and found peace. They lost their 5 year old son to dysentery. His wife, Dorothy, went insane. She lost her mind. And it was suggested by many people that William admit her to an insane asylum. He refused. He believed that the wife whom he loved would be mistreated and that he could care for her better.

Dorothy became so deranged that she would verbally attack William, physically attack him in public, attempted to kill him, and even accused him of adultery falsely.

Carey is considered one of the greatest examples of a Christian missionary. How often do we overlook or miss the challenges that these people had to overcome.

John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians. **"Poverty has its problems, but so does plenty. Affluent people become lax and do not know how to handle their wealth. Paul was not like that. He spent what he had on others."**

**Anxiety;** Am I anxious because I am fretful, fearful of my own flesh and my own desires OR Am I anxious because God's will be not being obeyed?

**One is anxiety caused by the fear of man the other is anxiety caused by the fear of God.**

**One leads to pain, the other leads to peace.**

**Encouragement.**

**Pray for peace. Pray for these things Paul lists here. Pray that the peace of Jesus Christ would guard your mind. That you would have a great faith in Him than in your circumstances.**

**Pray, ask in confidence, knowing that this is God's will. 'that if you ask anything in His name, he will answer it' John 15**

**Conclusion.**

**Let's be reminded to pray about EVERYTHING. Let's encourage each other to prayer about every single detail. Just habituate it.**