

Gratitudes - part 2 – Rest not restlessness.

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BIG IDEA – God’s ways and desires are designed for our rest and restoration.

scripture focus - Matthew 11:28-30 NLT “Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (*Jesus’ prayer of Thanksgiving*).

Since day one, restlessness and stress have stolen joy out of people’s lives. While the pandemic tried to teach us to slow down, life seems busier than ever, and a new “drug” has been born...“hyper-activity.” Anxiety, stress, and restlessness can be deadly. We scrape and scramble for answers that no one can give; obsessing for clarity and reasons no one can fulfill! Our racing minds lead to racing hearts which can lead to hopelessness. Good news! Jesus has the antidote: “COME TO ME.”

Are You Addicted to Being Busy?

Brené Brown’s “Daring Greatly,” she writes: “One of the most **universal numbing strategies is what I call crazy-busy**. I often say that when they start having twelve-step meetings for busy-aholics, they’ll need to rent out football stadiums. We are a culture of people who’ve bought into the idea that if we stay busy enough, the truth of our lives won’t catch up with us.”

I believe the pandemic tried to teach us to slow down. Ah, to smell the rich aroma of coffee with a friend or the porch visit with grandma.

Addictions are no longer limited to “substances.” Can people become addicted to activities? Can we get a hormone high from a neurotransmitter from being obsessed with busyness? It is helpful to recognize that people do not actually become “addicted” to a substance itself. Instead, people become “addicted” to the effect of those substances on the brain. There are several God-given hormones that give us a happy brain boost – dopamine, serotonin, endorphins, and oxytocin. Activating these hormones come from healthy and unhealthy means.

Effects of Anxiety on the Body - It’s a killer!

- rapid breathing
- heart rate
- lightheadedness or dizziness
- abdominal pain
- indigestion
- chest pain
- fatigue
- insomnia
- headache

The effects of anxiety disorders are even worse!

Anxiousness can get the best of us. We scrape and scramble for answers that no one can give, obsessing for clarity and reasons no one can fulfill! Our racing minds lead to racing hearts!

Robin and I watched the movie, "[His Only Son](#)," by Angel Studios (same that distributes The Chosen). It's the story of Abram being willing to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. We were so moved by Abram's wife, Sarai, who had so many questions, such understandable impatience, waiting for God to fulfill the promise to her husband and eventually the entire Jewish nation.

It was painful to watch Sarai continue to press Abram for answers he did not have! All he could say is, I have faith and trust God to keep His word. It's a great movie, you should watch it. I was so moved by how we get anxious about so many things, even good things that God has promised must come by His timing.

I know that many of my friends solve these problems, this tension to fill the anxious space with busyness. It's as if they have a **proclivity to activity** - if I just keep moving, I don't have to think about stuff. I don't think that's the answer either.

The best way to deal with anxiety, worry and restlessness is God's antidote to anxiety.

Our friends at [SoulShepherding](#), Bill and Kristi Gaultiere, have some wonderful resources on their website listed in the notes. But I believe that God's Word directly addresses our human anxieties and how to deal with them.

I want to start with a simple outline the Apostle Paul uses in his letter to the churches in Philippi- It's the New Testament book of Philippians.

This is one of Paul's "prison letters" because he is under house arrest in Rome when this letter was written. **Remember, the Apostle Paul is generally considered the author of 13 letters, almost 50% of the 27 New Testament books.**

In **Philippians 4:6-7 NLT** <https://bible.com/bible/116/php.4.6-7.NLT>

Paul writes, **"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. His **peace will guard your hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus."

However, **these verses have a story behind them.** Although it's often memorized, quoted and spoken on – **Theses verses are in the context of relationship conflict between two women, Euodia and Syntyche.**

It is interesting that **Paul skillfully uses a relational conflict between two women in Philippi, possibly two women deacons, to illustrate how to deal with this kind of anxiety, stress, and worry.** Of course, he is writing to admonish the ladies to deal with their disagreement for the sake of unity in the body of a Christ. But

Paul goes further, talking about how to properly deal with worry. The word he uses for anxious is to be "divided into parts."

Notice that anxiety in this case is both personal and corporate in its effects. It's Paul's solution that is surprising. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he suggests that prayer, begging or requesting God and gratitude can help us when anxious.

The first two antidotes, prayer and requests, are certainly postures of need.

But gratitude, thanksgiving, what is that about?

Gratitude becomes a posture of attitude. Thankfulness helps us adjust our internal barometer, our perspective.

Stop, pray, and give thanks!

In know it sounds so prescriptive, like following three simple steps to peace and happiness.

But I like to think of it as a **checklist to save our lives.**

I still remember the checklist to run through if I or someone else catches on fire!

I have never caught myself on fire, nor rescued anyone on fire - but I still remember the list just in case, and I'm ready when that time comes!

Do you remember the checklist? Stop, drop and roll. It was drilled into us in elementary school.

We have so many anxious moments **maybe we need a similar, simply three-step action plan:**

Stop - Come to God first

- **Psalms 46:10**, be still.
 - o **Psalms 46:10 NLT** “**Be still, and know that I am God!** I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.”
 - o And it worked! Written on the victory of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:26-30, “**So Jehoshaphat’s kingdom was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.**”
- **Matthew 11:28**, Come to God
 - o Jesus speaking, **Matthew 11:28-30 NLT** <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.11.28-30.NLT> “Then Jesus said, “**Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” This was titled “Jesus’ prayer of Thanksgiving,” in our Bibles!
 - o **Doesn’t this sound like the best place to start getting rid of stress, by stopping and coming to God? Jesus actually told us to come to him!**

Pray – Lay everything out

- **Psalms 51:12**, Confess, don't run and hide.
 - o “**Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.**”
 - o Yeah, this was after David's somewhat forced confession about Bathsheba. He got caught because God told the prophet Nathan exactly what happened. But David laid it all out before God, confessed, repented, and asked God to restore him. Don't run and hide, don't try to get away from God, move in and tell Him everything.
- **1 Peter 5:7**, Give it all to Him, verbalize it – PRAY.

- **“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” Peter, knowing all about failure under pressure. Knowing all about faith and trust in Jesus without knowing what was really going to happen. Trusting God that it would all make sense.**
- **Peter outright tells us to give it to God! He writes this to the elders, the pastors, but also to the young, the flock – using the same word for anxiety – being “Drawn in opposite directions.”**
- **Praying is hard for some folks whether it’s personal or public. Because of the unique way I came to faith, I have never had an issue with personal prayer. I talk to God all the time about anything and everything that is going on. Do not think this is special or spiritual- it’s not like that. The majority of time, I’m griping or complaining about stuff. I talk with God about weird things, wild questions. I have just as many problems giving God my stress, my anxiousness as anyone else.**
- **Don’t hold onto this nasty stuff – get rid of it, give it to God. We were never meant to carry it!**

Give thanks – Let God work in you and for you.

- Give Thanks,

- **“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”**
 - **Psalms 106:1** <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.106.1.NIV>
 - **Psalms 107:1** <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.107.1.NIV>
 - **Psalms 118:1** <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.118.1.NIV>
 - **Psalms 136:1** <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.136.1.NIV>

- Same words in four different Psalms, four different circumstances.

- **To give thanks because God is good. God is for us. His love and mercy are towards us. Yield to Him. Turn to Him. Humble yourself before Him and let God work in you and for you.**

Let me tell you about man named Henry Smith and his anxiety...

A popular song came out in 1986 and was sung by thousands of people in churches all over the world. The song was simply titled, “Give Thanks.”

“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart” was written in 1978 by Henry Smith. Henry Smith wrote a lot of songs – 300 of them. The song was his only published worship song out of 300 unpublished compositions.[1] It was written after Smith had trouble finding work after graduating from university. He also suffered from a degenerative condition that eventually left him legally blind.[2] While at his church in Williamsburg, Virginia, his pastor inspired him with a reference to how Jesus made himself poor to make others rich through him. When Smith

started performing the song in church, a visiting United States Military officer took the song to Europe, from where its popularity spread.[1] **In 1986, Integrity Music published the song sung by [Don Moen](#).**

"Give Thanks"

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

NOTES

Scriptures

Psalms 46:10 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/psa.46.10.NLT>

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

Matthew 11:28-30 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.11.28-30.NLT>

"Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Jesus' prayer of Thanksgiving).

Psalms 51:12 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/psa.51.12.NLT>

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you." After David's confession about Bathsheba.

1 Peter 5:7 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/1pe.5.7.NLT>

"Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

Philippians 4:6-7 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/php.4.6-7.NLT>

“**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. His **peace will guard your hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus.” (context of relationship conflict b/t Euodia and Syntyche).

Psalms 106:1 <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.106.1.NIV>

Psalms 107:1 <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.107.1.NIV>

Psalms 118:1 <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.118.1.NIV>

Psalms 136:1 <https://bible.com/bible/111/psa.136.1.NIV>

“**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.**” **Psalms 106:1, Psalms 107:1, Psalms 118:1, Psalms 136:1**

Questions

Q: Have you felt the pace of life speed up post pandemic? Explain.

Q: Please share a couple of your personal coping mechanisms when stressed?

Q: Why is it so hard for us to just **STOP** or **PAUSE** when we are clearly overwhelmed?

Q: When you pray, do you try to be genuine or use more spiritual language – or both?

Q: Does gratitude and thankfulness help adjust your perceptions and attitudes?

Diving Deeper into God's Word

Strong's Concordance

#3309 merimnaó: to be anxious, to care for. I am over-anxious; with acc: I am anxious about, distracted; I care for. Drawn in opposite directions; "divided into parts" (A. T. Robertson); (figuratively) "to go to pieces" because pulled apart (in different directions), like the force exerted by sinful anxiety (worry).

#1162 deésis: a need, entreaty. praying for a specific, felt need") – heart-felt petition, arising out of deep personal need (sense of lack, want). Comes from the word for beg or request.

#2169 eucharistia: thankfulness, giving of thanks. Gratitude; giving of thanks.

Vincent's Word Study

Philippians 4:2 These were **prominent women in the Church, possibly deaconesses.** The position of women in Macedonia was exceptional. In Greece, generally, their standing was inferior. The Athenian law prescribed that everything that a man might do by the consent or request of a woman should be null in law. In Macedonia monuments were erected to women by public bodies, and in Macedonian inscriptions records of male proper names are found formed on the mother's name instead of the father's. Macedonian women were permitted to hold property. **In the account of Paul's labors in Macedonia there are notices of the addition of women of rank to the church in Thessalonica and Berea.**

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Philippians 4:2 Euodia and Syntyche were two women who seem to have been at variance; probably deaconesses of the church. He repeats, "I beseech," as if he would admonish each separately, and with the utmost impartiality.

Internet Links

[SoulShepherd's 31 Antidotes to Anxiety](#)

History behind the song, "Give Thanks."

"Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" was **written in 1978 by Henry Smith**. The song was his only published worship song out of 300 unpublished compositions.[1] **It was written after Smith had trouble finding work after graduating from university. He also suffered from a degenerative condition that eventually left him legally blind.**[2] **While at his church in Williamsburg, Virginia, his pastor inspired him with a reference to how Jesus made himself poor to make others rich through him.** When Smith started performing the song in church, a visiting United States Military officer took the song to Europe, from where its popularity spread.[1] **In 1986, Integrity Music published the song on their Hosanna! Music audio cassette but credited it as "author unknown". Later that year, Don Moen released the song on his Give Thanks album.**[3] Smith contacted Integrity to inform them of his authorship and they said that they had been attempting to track him down. As a result, Smith signed a writer-publisher agreement with Integrity for distribution rights to the song.[1]

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