

Be Anxious for Nothing

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Philippians 4:4-7 (NLT) Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again, rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. ⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ 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.

Introduction: *A very nervous airline passenger began pacing the terminal when bad weather delayed his flight. During his walk, he came across a life insurance machine. It offered \$100,000 in the event of an untimely death aboard his flight. The policy was just three dollars.*

He looked out the window at the threatening clouds and thought of his family at home. For that price it was foolish not to buy, so he took out the coverage. He then looked for a place to eat and settled on his favorite, Chinese.

It was a relaxing meal until he opened his fortune cookie. It read, "Your recent investment will pay big dividends."

Worry has a way of ruining a good meal as well as robbing us of our peace and joy.

If anybody had an excuse for giving in to worrying, it would have been the Apostle Paul.

The church he had planted in Philippi on his second missionary trip was facing three types of problems. First, many of them were facing persecution from those outside the church. Second, false teachers had infiltrated the church and finally two of the key women leaders were not getting along and as a result were causing dissension in the church. On top of all this, he is writing while incarcerated in Rome and facing possible execution for his faith. (*Phil 1:27-30; 3:1-3; 4:1-3*)

However, in the midst of all this he writes, don't worry about anything (NKJV - Be anxious for nothing). Don't misunderstand he was concerned for the church but he refrained from stressing and worrying.

When you are concerned, you are not ignoring the problem, but you are also not allowing your thoughts to be consumed by emotions and anxiety.

"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy." - Leo Buscaglia

Undoubtedly, Paul had valid reasons to be worried, yet he wasn't! Jesus was the center of His life and he was learning to live like Him. Paul was learning not to worry and he counsels the church to follow suit.

How do you do that?

1. Rejoice in the Lord always

Philippians 4:4 (NLT) Always be full of joy in the Lord.

(AMP) Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, take pleasure in Him]

Paul is not calling us to be optimistic and experience a baseless happiness. The cause of our joy as Christians is the Lord.

We worry most when we take our eyes off of who Christ is and what He has done.

For Paul joy was connected to the salvation and relationship he enjoyed with the Lord. It was not dependent upon how things were going in his life or ministry.

This didn't mean that he didn't experience sorrow (2:27) but that joy was the overall attitude of his life and ministry.

- He prayed for the believers with joy

Philippians 1:4 (NLT) Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy

- He rejoiced that the gospel was being preached even if by those who had wrong motives.

Philippians 1:18 (NLT) Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. ¹⁸ But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.

- He rejoiced in the midst of possible execution

Even the thought of being executed in service of the faith of others made him glad and joyful

Philippians 2:17 (NLT) But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.

Christ was the source of his strength and the basis of his joy.

We will never attain genuine happiness and peacefulness if we place our trust in unpredictable and ever-changing circumstances rather than in Christ.

Jesus is the King of Peace and the Rock of Salvation who frees us from anxiety and fear of the future. Even when things don't seem to be going the way we believe they should, we can put our trust in Him because He is the constant and dependable source of joy.

2. **Choose not to worry**

Philippians 4:6 (NLT) Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.

Worry is like a thief that robs us of our joy and peace. It's not enough just to tell ourselves to "stop worrying" because the thief will never be caught that way.

Paul learned to be joyful and free of worry. His security and peace were found in Christ.

Paul gives us practical two simple steps for freedom from worry:

Pray about everything

Philippians 4:6 (NLT) Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Too many times we give in to worry because instead of telling God about what we do need we go around complaining and telling people about what we don't have.

When it comes to prayer we need to learn to practice three things, worship, petition and thanksgiving.

Whenever we find ourselves worrying, the first thing we should do is to get alone with God and worship Him.

To worship Him is to acknowledge who He is. He cares, He knows and He hears. (Matt 6:25-33)

Because He cares, knows and hears then ask for what you need.

Because He cares, knows and hears learn to be grateful for what He has already done.
(Thanksgiving)

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NLT) So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. ⁷ Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

Philippians 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. ⁷ 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.

Get your thinking right

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

If you compare this list to David's description of the Word of God in Psalm 19:7-9, you will see a parallel.

Psalm 19:7-9 (NLT) The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living. ⁹Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair.

The Christian who fills his heart and mind with God's Word will have a built-in sensor for detecting wrong thoughts. So, let's be a reader and students of the word of God.

If we truly want the peace of God, if we want joy instead of misery then we need have a relationship with Christ, we need to align our thoughts with His thoughts in the word, we need to set up a time for daily prayer and need to be thankful for all he has already done for us.

A worry-free mind is a Christ centered mind. We need to be like Jesus. He didn't worry so why should we.