

“The Epistle of Joy (Part 12 – Philippians 4:4-7)”

Paul writes in Philippians 4:4-7: “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!* ⁵ *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.* ⁶ *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;* ⁷ *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” Let’s face it—in today’s world there are lots of things to worry about and fret over. However, we are commanded here to *not worry* and to be *anxious about nothing*. You see, when we worry, we’re really saying that God can’t take care of us and that our problems are bigger than His promises. There are many things in life that we have no control over, but we can always rejoice in the Lord when we turn our worries into prayers. Don’t focus on things that will make you anxious; instead, make the choice to rejoice. ***The best way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything!***

When tempted to fret about something, it’s helpful to remember that the Lord is near, standing beside us, ready to help. The Apostle Paul commands us in Philippians 4:6 to “*be anxious for nothing.*” Instead of obeying this command we often load ourselves up with all kinds of worries and concerns – and we wonder why we’re going under. Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything. Turn your worries into prayers. The Apostle Paul also tells us in Philippians 4:6 that our prayers are to be offered “*with thanksgiving.*” Before rushing to quickly to presenting our requests before the Lord, we need to camp out a while on the thanksgiving part.

We are to pray about everything: concerns at work, home, school; financial matters; conflicts, church matters, etc. Everything. Yes, we need to take action on many of these things, but not before we have prayed. If something starts to make you anxious – don’t get frantic, pray about it. I like the story of the five boys who claimed two blocks of property for God in the early morning hours of January 1, 1915 in Springfield, MO. Five years after the prayer Central Assembly of God erected its first frame building on a portion of that two-block area. Thirty years after the boys claimed that land for God the Assemblies of God purchased a large portion of the property in that two-block area and built a publishing house, distribution center, and administrative offices. When one of those five boys returned to Springfield in 1972, now grown, accompanied by his wife – and saw the transformation which had taken place on the land that he and his young friends had claimed in the New Year’s prayer 57 years earlier, he said, “*I’m overwhelmed. When I see the presses turning out the printed word, and the missionaries being commissioned, and the radio programs going to the ends of the earth, I know there is a God who hears our sincere prayers.*”

So, let your requests be made known to God. The Apostle Paul tells us to do so in Philippians 4:6. True, God knows all about the things that concern us. But when we present them to the Lord in prayer we are laying out all our troubles before Him and casting all our cares upon Him. The wonderful result of applying Philippians 4:6 is spelled out in Philippians 4:7: *the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!* What an exchange! We give up our

anxieties and worries and get His perfect peace instead! We may not be able to explain His peace, but thank God we can sure experience His peace. There's nothing like it. If we pray about everything, and refuse to be anxious about anything, God will give us His perfect peace – even in the midst of the storms of life!

Someone wrote, *“When I am worried about something, I picture this: I hold my hands together, open, palms up. I place my fear or worry in my hands. I picture God’s big hands in the same fashion, underneath mine. I open my hands and dump that fear into His open hands.”* Why don't you place your worries and concerns into the mighty hands of God today?

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Do you struggle with anxiety or worry? How can this text help you overcome and conquer?
2. What has God done in your life? What are you thankful for?
3. Keep praying. Keep staking your claims for the Lord.
4. What worries and concerns do you need to “dump” into the mighty hands of God right now?
5. Are you experiencing God's unexplainable peace?