

Philippians 4:6–9

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.

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

“Don’t Worry” **Philippians 4:6-9**

INTRO:

Several years ago there was a popular little song that said, *“Don’t Worry, Be Happy!”* While this is very good advice, the statement doesn’t really help us defeat the evil we call worry. The Bible is not silent on the problem of worry. In fact, in this little epistle to the Philippians, which Paul wrote from a Roman prison cell, he counsels the Philippians on how they can be free from the demon of worry. His counsel is contained in **4:6-9**.

In our exploration of this paragraph, we will find Paul’s advice is couched in three statements. In **verse 6** he gives us the Principle – *“Stop being anxious about anything.”* He followed with the Promise in **verse 7**, *“The peace of God will garrison your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* Finally, in **verses 8-9** Paul described The Practice That Will Lead to Lasting Peace in our lives.

I. The Principle (v. 6)

II. A Promise (v.7)

III. The Practice (v.8-9)

I. The Principle (v. 6)

A. Here is Paul’s timeless truth.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

1. Now not worrying is a great idea. How were they and how are we to do this? We need to use the tools that the Lord has given us to deal with worry. First, we need to take positive action instead of indulging in a negative habit. ***“But,”*** means in contrast to worrying, pray, supplicate, and give thanks.

2. Prayer is the process of communication and communion with the living God. If we do not pray, we do not have much of a relationship with God Who loves us and has saved us. Through the cultivation of a habit of prayer, we begin to win the battle over worry.

3. The LORD reminded us many times in His word to transfer our cares to Him. Listen to King David who wrote after being betrayed by Ahithophel,

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22

The Apostle Peter repeats this wonderful admonition in **1 Peter 5:7**, ***“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”*** Why do we have such a hard time doing this? Perhaps we need more practice.

B. The second tool is ***“supplication.”*** This word means to ask specifically what we think we need. ***“I am hungry, give me something to eat.”*** This is identifying the real source of our concern and asking for the answer to it specifically. The Apostle James exhorted us, ***“You have not because you ask not.”*** We need to learn to break down our worries into identifiable needs and to ask specifically for those needs.

C. The third tool in Paul’s toolbox is gratitude, ***“with Thanksgiving.”*** Some think this means thanking God in advance for what He will do. This may be a good idea. However, this most likely refers to taking a trip down memory lane and remembering what God has already done.

1. Remember when David was faced with 9' 9" Goliath? How did he mentally prepare himself for the challenge? What did he tell Saul?

“And Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.’ But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.’ Moreover David said, ‘The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’” 1 Samuel 17:33-36

2. When we take time to thank God for the things He has already done for us, we begin to think, ***“You know the Lord has brought me this far, He isn’t going to drop me now!”***

II. A Promise (v.7)

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7

A. If we will faithfully use the tools God provided us to use against worry, we will find the fulfillment of the promise in **verse 7**.

B. Notice first the source of the peace. This is the peace which comes from God. It is also the peace which comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace is not the result of circumstances. Peace comes from the presence of our Lord.

“I will not fear for You are with me.” Psalm 23:4

C. Second, notice that this peace surpasses knowledge. One of my favorite verses of the great hymn, *“Jesus the very Thought of Thee,”* says, *“The love of Jesus what it is/ none but His loved ones know.”* This is also true of the peace He gives. We could sing, *“the peace of God, what it is, none but His loved ones know.”*

D. Third, His peace guards our hearts and minds. Robertson observes, *“God’s peace as a sentinel mounts guard over our lives.”* I think I had this garrisoning when I had my heart attack. Such peace can only be ours if we *“cast our anxieties upon Him for He cares for us!”*

III. The Practice (v.8-9)

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:8-9

A. We might think like this. Oh, Paul, I have swallowed the magic pill and now I am victorious over worry. Not yet, my friend. There is yet a practice to instill into our lives. The practice is found in **verse 8-9**. We must deal with how we think and how we act.

B. Truthfully, too many of us do not spend our time thinking about the things we should think about. Paul was a cognitive therapist before cognitive therapy was cool.

C. Instead of thinking out *“worst case” scenarios, “catastrophizing,”* we should be thinking about things which are *“true,” “honorable,” “righteous,” “pure” “acceptable in God’s sight.” “commendable” “if any of good character,”* or *“praise,” “meditate on [fill your thoughts with] these things.”* Only the grace of God supplies these supernatural qualities in our lives.

1. Do these qualities characterize the things that pass through our minds? Probably not. Can we be thinking about the worst case scenario and fill our minds with these things? No, we cannot.

2. Do we have thoughts like these when we watch the news broadcasts? What must we dwell on in place of these worrying images?

3. We must remember who our God is, and what He has done before in our lives and then let Him handle the problem.

4. Hold on tight to what Jesus taught in **Matthew 6:31-34**.

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

D. Finally, the Apostle Paul adds the behavior part of his prescription. Think about it. The Apostle Paul wrote this counseling session from a Roman prison. In the Roman prison he was an example of what they needed to follow.

1. Remember how he approached the situation of his possible execution? He did not worry about the possibilities but rather he put it in perspective.

2. *“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

Could we do this? This is the example we must follow. In our text Paul wrote, *“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”* (verse 9).

Let us also learn how to do this.

When we are tempted to worry, we must:

1. First, pray, supplicate, and thank God for what He has done.

2. Second, remember the Promise. *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

3. Third, we must fill our minds with the right thoughts, thoughts about things which come from God and please God.

4. And follow Paul’s example. Then the God of peace will be with us. May we with God’s help so learn this that others may learn from our example.

Hymn# 201 Grace Greater Than Our Sin