



Be Anxious for Nothing

We've come to one of the more famous verses in Scripture, sandwiched between several very encouraging statements and instructive commands Paul wrote to the church in Philippi. Today's passage is often quoted, put on wall art, screensavers, and coffee mugs. But the truths in this exhortation are very important for every believer to understand and consciously take into account every day.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 NASB

Looking back two verses, we see the Apostle Paul had just reminded believers to ***rejoice in the Lord [Christ] always*** and to ***let our gentle spirits be known*** to everyone (Phil. 4:4-5). And then he says, ***"be anxious for nothing."***

If we just stop right here and meditate on this statement it will very likely convict our hearts. Even if we aren't worried or anxious for something specific at the moment, we know how easy worry creeps into our minds. If we are in a tough season with a lot of uncertainty, change, illness, or heartache, we may be even more convicted by these four little words because our worry or anxiety could be quite a bit more invasive. I stumble in this area without even realizing it, sometimes unaware how much the worries of life's present circumstances are occupying my thought life and dragging down my trust in God's love for me.

Remember, Paul meant what he said: ***be anxious for nothing***. This is not a suggestion, but a command from the Lord's apostle. And his instruction was not new, it echoed the teachings Christ, as we read in the gospel accounts:

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." Matthew 6:31-32

"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own". Matthew 6:34

"And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?" Luke 12:25-27

In the parable of the sower Jesus told of just how dangerous it is to our spiritual health to allow worry and anxiety to take root: ***"And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this***



is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” Matthew 13:22

So how can we put away worry and anxiety? Paul tells us in this very verse: ***“but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”***

The Greek text reveals an interesting doubling-down on the command to give it all over to God. ***Prayer*** is from *proseuchē* and implies an earnest verbal prayer to God, while ***supplication*** (*deēsis*) is very similar, meaning seeking, asking, or entreating to God. So just like Jesus often said, “truly, truly I say to you...”, in essence Paul says here, ***“be anxious for nothing by praying and praying again.”***

And in what manner should we pray? With ***thanksgiving***. While in the Greek this word is a noun (*eucharistia*), it reads like an English verb, it speaks to the act of being grateful or having gratitude, specifically in worship to God. We see the command to be thankful threaded throughout all of Scripture and it is certainly a critical aspect of honoring God.

Considering this, let’s reflect on the first part of this verse again, which is the instruction to not be anxious. I believe an intentional conscious effort to do this may be needed for some of us to even become fully aware of how much anxiety rules our thoughts and lives. Identifying when worry creeps in, we can then begin to actively train ourselves to stop and pray to God ***with thanksgiving*** and praise, and then do it again... and again... and again.

Perhaps one of the first ***requests we can make known to God*** is that He help us repent of worry and to trust Him. We can make this request in faith and with proactive thanksgiving, knowing that He hears us. Apostle John said, ***“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.”*** (1 John 5:14-15).

Can we believe it is God’s will that we not worry? Absolutely! So let’s go to God with the faith of a mustard seed, trusting that He can remove a mountain of anxiety if we fully surrender to Him in thanksgiving and praise.

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