

—Phil 4.5-7—

*Lesson 4 – Preventing Anxious Care*

- I. Three means that, with the Lord's blessing, can prevent sinful anxiety, worry, and fear.
  - A. *The way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything*, v.6.
  - B. Believingly embrace God's all-sufficiency, Ex 6.7; Lev 26.12.
    1. Study God's all-sufficiency in Scripture (Js 1.17) and see:
      - a) that He, above all and more than all, can satisfy all your desires and protect you from all your fears;
      - b) that there is in Him all the good you're looking for in outward things, and infinitely more;
      - c) that He can communicate that good to you easily, plentifully, seasonably;
      - d) that He can prevent, divert, or remove all the evil you're eager to avoid or else turn it into good.
    2. Charge the truth of God's all-sufficiency upon your troubled mind and heart until it eases your mind of all its worries, cf. Ps 42.5, 11; 43.5.
      - a) Is He not sufficient for you, who is sufficient for all things?
      - b) If He is, and if you have enough in Him, and if you have more than those who have most in the world without Him, and if you have far more in Him than the whole world comes to, then what occasion do you have to be anxious about anything any more?
      - c) Is God enough for thousands and millions of angels and glorified saints, enough for all the creatures of heaven and earth, and not enough for you?
      - d) Should he who has a Kingdom trouble himself about an acre of land?
      - e) Should one who has a treasure of infinite value be so anxious about a penny?
      - f) Has God laid up for you in heaven as your portion, more than has ever entered into the heart of man to desire, more than you could ever imagine or think of, and are you still hankering and fussing over the fleeting, vain things of this earth?
      - g) If you believed in God's all-sufficiency toward you, your anxieties about the world would disappear, Mt 6.30-31.
    3. Believe that God can even make up your necessities when you lack them. He can give you contentment, joy, and peace even in the face of situations in which you have nothing else and everything seems to be against you, Hab 3.17-18; Ps 4-6-8; 5.8-12; 6.9-10; 7.9-10; 11.1-3.
    4. Believe there's no good to be had from temporal things without God.
      - a) All the anxiety in the world can't squeeze one drop of good out of created things unless God lets it out. All the good that is in creation *derivatively* is in God *essentially* so that no good can come from them without His permission.
      - b) That means these things are useless to you without God. Food, clothing, and rest, though you have all you need and more, won't serve you with health, warmth, and strength unless God blesses it, Mic 6.14-15; Hag 1.6, 9.
    5. Believe that, when and as it pleases Him, God can communicate temporal good to you:
      - a) Easily, Ps 147.15; 107.20; 104.28; 145.16. That which the creation can't do, with all its abundance, and that which we can't do, with all our anxiety, He can do more easily than we can open our hand.
      - b) Plentifully, Ps 104.28; 68.10; 37.16; 1Tim 6.17.

- c) Seasonably, Ps 104.27. God gives us temporal things when they won't be hurtful to us and when they'll be the most helpful to us. We would have the things of the world whenever we want them, whether it's good for us or not. We don't consider whether or not it's helpful or seasonable. But the Lord knows perfectly and can give us what we need when it would be good for us.
6. Believe that He can keep you from whatever you're anxious to avoid or ease you of whatever you're burdened by.
- a) Losses, troubles, and sufferings are wholly and sovereignly at His disposal. He can prevent them when they're far off and keep them so. He can divert them when they're near and turn them another way. And He can remove them when they're upon you.
- b) Everything is in the best hands it could be in when they're in His hands. If you can believe this you'll find your heart at rest in every situation—because things are as well as they can be when He manages them. Clarkson, “All that might trouble you lies still as a stone on the ground and can't move without the Hand which you have so many reasons to trust, and more reasons to trust than your own; and if you believe this, how can you be anxious? All that can afflict you is in the hand of your God. And if He can be trusted then your mind can be at ease, because there's not the least occasion to be anxious, Dan 3.16-17.”
7. Believe that God can keep you from suffering in suffering.
- a) The things we fear in outward things are the hurt and damage we might get from them. But if the Lord can keep you from suffering in suffering and being troubled by troubles, why do you need to care what you lose by it since no real damage can come from it, Dan 3.16-17?
- b) He can do you good by afflictions, Ps 119.71. He can render them as good or better for you than freedom from them could possibly be, 2Cor 12.8-10. But believe this and you'll see how absurd it is to fear any suffering since it can only do for you what's best for you.
- c) If you lose much of what you have, He can make your little more satisfying and sufficient than your plenty, Pr 15.16; 16.8. It's not the quantity of things but the virtue of them that's important, and the Lord can convey more virtue into your little than your plenty could ever give you. He can do more good to you by your sufferings than you'd ever find without them, Gen 50.20; Jer 24.5, 7; Rom 8.28; 1Pet 1.6-7.
8. Believe that God is *willing* to do all this for you, Ps 34.10; 84.11; 85.12; Jer 32.40-41; Mt 7.11; Phil 4.19. But believe this and you'll be ashamed, if not astonished, at the absurdity and unreasonableness of all your worries.
- a) God is so willing that you should partake of such sweet, rich, and glorious things that He's not willing for you to suffer for a single moment that's not for your good, and even better than not suffering would be for you, Ps 89.30-34. Do you think the Apostle Paul, for all his sufferings, would've changed positions with Nero, 2Cor 12.8-10?
- b) And best of all, the Lord is willing to use your afflictions to free you from your greatest evil, namely, your sin and your corruption, which is the misery of your soul, Isa 27.9; Isa 1.25, and hereby make you partakers of that which is the greatest good you're capable of on earth: that holiness which is the health, beauty, life, and glory of the soul, Heb 12.10-11; 2Cor 4.16-18.