

Principles for Stability in Your Christian Life

ANXIOUS FREE LIVING

Pt3

Philippians 4:1-7

Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

⁴ 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.

I understand why the world is stressed out. I understand why people are anxious. I understand why they worry. I understand why they have panic attacks. It's frightening to be dangling in this inexplicable universe and feeling all alone and not being able to figure out why you're even here and where you're going. I understand there's a certain cosmic fear. I understand why people take drugs and drink and go on eating

binges and shopping binges and wild adventures and all kinds of things to fill their minds with other thoughts. We are living in an anxiety-ridden culture. And the amazing thing about it is this is the most indulged, the most lavished society ever, this is the most comfortable society ever, this is the society that has the most but it seems to be the most anxt-ridden, anxious, stressed out, panicked culture ever. We have a massive medical world that exists to do nothing but help people with stress. No worry goes unnamed. No worry goes undefined. No worry goes uncataloged. No worry goes undiagnosed. And no worry goes unmedicated. They just go unrelieved. People live with anxiety. They live with worry. They live with stress. But it's so common that we don't even talk about eliminating it. The term is "to manage it." You take a course, go to a seminary, listen to a lecture, buy a tape on stress management like it was a baseball team, needed a manager or a production line. When Jesus comes along and says, "I'm not going to teach you how to manage your stress, I'll eliminate it."

The goal in the society we live in is managed anxiety, how to somehow get rid of the panic, the stress, the anxiousness that you feel because you are dangling in the midst of a cosmic universe that's inexplicable to you and there are inordinate and underlying subliminal fears and anxieties that rise to the surface very often.

And it gets to be pretty serious with many people, about 20 million in America, 20 million adults are annual subjects of the mental illness world, about 42 billion dollars a year in government costs.

They come with anxiety disorders that are given names, even though they are engaged in what's called co-morbidity which means they overlap and intermingle. It's not as if you just have sort of one area of anxiety, there are several categories.

There's what's called General AD which is General Anxiety Disorder, and I suppose you could throw almost everything in there.

And then there's Obsessive Compulsive Anxiety Disorder which means you do really weird things like wash your hands a hundred times a day, or pull your hair out, or rub your nose a way, or some other inexplicable compulsive kind of behavior.

And then there is Panic Disorder in which you go into a high level of panic, rapid-heart palpitation, extreme fear and there's no real circumstantial reason for it. There is post-traumatic stress, AD which is some level of panic which you feel after something that you just went through. There is what's called Social Anxiety Disorder which I guess means you wouldn't have it if you didn't hang around people. And then there is Specific AD, specific phobias about...some people go into anxiety if they see a rat or some with a snake or some have anxiety over a storm, some people literally have a phobia with closets, agoraphobia, claustrophobia, acrophobia, heights, etc., etc. And about 50 percent of the American population experiences some kind of psychiatric anxiety disorder, about half the people in America in their life.

A hundred million are estimated worldwide to have panic attacks, just out of nowhere to feel a terrible, terrifying panic.

This is huge. And, of course, the medical business is huge to deal with it or to attempt to manage it and the drug companies, of course, are the main player in how that is managed.

According to Ohio State University, they have a website in which they deal with some of these things, and one of the statements on their website is, "The goal of any treatment is to make anxiety a manageable part of daily existence." The best the world can offer you is to manage your anxiety. Jesus offers you to eliminate it. Does that sound like a good deal? Get rid of it all together? Stop it?

The world will offer you cognitive behavior therapy, or a long list of drugs. But our compassionate God offers a far-better solution and that's the elimination of your anxiety all together. Stop being anxious, stop worrying, stop being afraid. Worry is a pretty deadly thing. Rosch(?) said, "Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained." You may start with just a little worry and it can engulf your whole life.

I was reading about the Bureau of Standards in Washington D.C. and they set all kinds of standards, and there was one little paragraph in there that said this, "A dense fog covering seven city blocks...are you with me?...a dense fog covering seven city blocks, a hundred-feet deep is composed of less than one glass of water divided into 60 thousand drops. Not much there...the paragraph said...but it cripples the whole community." Well that's what can happen in worry. You can

have something the size of one glass of water cripple a whole community.

“How can a person deal with anxiety? You might try what one fellow did. He worried so much that he decided to hire someone to do his worrying for him. He found a man who agreed to be his hired worrier for a salary of \$200,000 per year. After the man accepted the job, his first question to his boss was, "Where are you going to get \$200,000 per year?" To which the man responded, "That's your worry.”

– Max Lucado

Principles for Stability

HOW TO STAND FAST

I. Pursue Harmony and Peace.

II. Maintain a spirit of JOY v. 4

III. Cultivate Humility

IV. TRUST GOD

v.5b The Lord *is* at hand.

⁶ Be anxious for nothing,

This introduces us to the Temptation we are all familiar with....WORRY

First we must recognize 2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS ABOUT GOD

A. W. Tozer warned years ago that

the Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men. This she has done not deliberately, but little by little and without her knowledge; and her very unawareness only makes her situation all the more tragic. The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error in our religious thinking." (Online version of **Knowledge Of The Holy**)

The result of the church's failure to equip believers with "*The knowledge of the Holy*" character and works of God leads ultimately to a lack of confidence in Him

1. GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

Jeremiah 23:24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Psalms 139:7-10 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

Acts 17:27 That they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

First, God cannot be contained in a building.

Second, God cannot be localized in a city or a nation.

Third, God cannot be reduced to an image or a statue.

Fourth, he is always present whether we believe it or not.

Fifth, he is present even in the worst moments of life.

Sixth, he is always available to us wherever we go, 24 hours a day.

Seventh, we may rely fully on him no matter how desperate our situation may be.

God is always present everywhere in the universe -

God can be ignored but he cannot be avoided -

2. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

First

1. GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

The Lord *is* at hand. OR NEAR

eggus: near (in place or time)

Original Word: ἔγγύς

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: eggus

Phonetic Spelling: (eng-goos')

Short Definition: near

Definition: near.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

of uncertain origin

Definition

near (in place or time)

NASB Translation

close (1), near (27), nearby (1), nearer (1), ready (1).

Near (1451) (eggus) can describe a **physical** position relatively close to another position or also a **temporal** position of one point of time relatively close to another point of time. Most commentators (cf Wuest's rendering above) feel Paul is making reference to the the nearness of the Lord's return but one cannot be dogmatic

In a parallel passage **James** says

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for **the coming of the Lord is at hand**. (eggizo - cognate verb of eggus) Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is **standing right at the door**. ([Jas 5:8,9](#))

2. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Arthur Pink

How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence. To say that God the Father has purposed the salvation of all mankind, that God the Son died with the express intention of saving the whole human race, and that God the Holy Spirit is now seeking to win the world to Christ; when, as a matter of common observation, it is apparent that the great majority of our fellowmen are dying in sin, and passing into a hopeless eternity; is to say that God the Father is *disappointed*, that God the Son is *dissatisfied*, and that God the Holy Spirit is *defeated*. We have stated the issue baldly, but there is no escaping the conclusion. To argue that God is "trying His best" to save all mankind, but that the majority of men will not let Him save them, is to insist that the will of the Creator is impotent, and that the will of the creature is omnipotent. To throw the blame, as many do, upon the Devil, does not remove the difficulty, for if Satan is defeating the purpose of God, then, Satan is Almighty and God is no longer the Supreme Being.

To declare that the Creator's original plan has been frustrated by sin, is to *dethrone* God. To suggest that God was taken by surprise in Eden and that He is now attempting to remedy an unforeseen calamity, is to

degrade the Most High to the level of a finite, erring mortal. To argue that man is a free moral agent and the determiner of his own destiny, and that therefore he has the power to checkmate his Maker, is to *strip* God of the attribute of Omnipotence. To say that the creature has burst the bounds assigned by his Creator, and that God is now practically a helpless Spectator before the sin and suffering entailed by Adam's fall, is to *repudiate* the express declaration of Holy Writ, namely, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath *shalt* Thou restrain" (Psa. 76:10). In a word, to deny the Sovereignty of God is to enter upon a path which, if followed to its logical terminus, is to arrive at blank atheism.

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like

me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

Psalm 103:19 The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Romans 9:21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

Romans 9:18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Psalm 135:6 Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Isaiah 45:7 I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

Proverbs 16:4 The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Job 23:13 But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Daniel 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Isaiah 14:27 For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?

2 Chronicles 20:6 And said, "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Job 12:23 He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away.

Job 12:13-14 "With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open.

Genesis 50:19-21 But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

1 Samuel 2:6 The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Ezra 6:22 And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Lamentations 3:38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

Isaiah 14:24 The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.

Isaiah 40:23-24 Who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,

when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

Philippians 1:12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

Daniel 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

Jeremiah 27:5 "It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.

Acts 2:23 This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

“Our God is sovereign. That means there's no such thing as luck. Anything that happens to you, good or bad, must pass through His fingers first. There are no accidents with God. I like the story of the cowboy who applied for health insurance. The agent routinely asked him, 'Have you ever had any accidents?' The cowboy replied, 'Well no, I've not had any accidents. I was bitten by a rattlesnake once, and a horse did kick me in the ribs. That laid me up for a while, but I haven't had any accidents.' The agent said, 'Wait a minute. I'm

confused. A rattlesnake bit you, and a horse kicked you, Weren't those accidents?' 'No, they did that on purpose.'”
 – Tony Evans, *Our God is Awesome: Encountering the Greatness of Our God*

BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING

ANXIOUS

merimnaó: to be anxious, to care for

Original Word: μεριμνάω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: merimnaó

Phonetic Spelling: (mer-im-nah'-o)

Short Definition: I am anxious, distracted

Definition: I am over-anxious; with acc: I am anxious about, distracted; I care for.

HELPS Word-studies

3309 *merimnáō* (from **3308** /*mérimna*, "a part, as opposed to the whole") – properly, drawn in opposite directions; "divided into parts" (A. T. Robertson); (figuratively) "to go to pieces" because *pulled apart* (in different directions), like the force exerted by sinful *anxiety* (*worry*). Positively, **3309** (*merimnáō*) is used of *effectively distributing* concern, in proper relation to the *whole* picture (cf. 1 Cor 12:25; Phil 2:20).

3809 (*merimnaō*) is "an old verb for worry and anxiety – literally, to be *divided*, distracted" (*WP*, 2, 156). It is more commonly used in this negative sense in the NT.

Worry has a fascinating etymology which can be traced back to the Old High German "wurgan" which means "to strangle" which is what worry does to our joy! **Webster** adds that in "dialect British" worry means to "choke" or to "strangle". The first definition of "**worry**" in Webster is "to harass by tearing, biting, or

snapping especially at the throat", and then "to subject to persistent or nagging attention or effort" and "to afflict with mental distress or agitation = make anxious". (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass)

Merimnao in the present context means to have an anxious concern, based on apprehension about possible danger or misfortune and is characterized by extreme uneasiness of mind or brooding fear about some contingency and emphasizes a fear of frustration, failure or disappointment.

The idea inherent in **merimnao** is of attempting to carry the burden of the future oneself and of unreasonable anxiety especially about things over which one has no control.

NOTHING

médeis, médemia, méden: no one, nothing

Original Word: μηδείς, μηδεμία, μηδέν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: médeis, médemia, méden

Phonetic Spelling: (may-dice')

Short Definition: no one, nothing

Definition: no one, none, nothing.

HELPS Word-studies

3367 *mēdeís* (from **3361** /*mé*, "not a possibility" and **1520** /*heís*, "one") – properly, "no one, nothing" – literally, "not even one."

Charles Spurgeon once said that...

our **anxiety** does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.

- Charles Spurgeon: “Cheer up, Christian! Things are not left to chance: no blind fate rules the world. God hath purposes, and those purposes are fulfilled. God hath plans, and those plans are wise, and never can be dislocated.”

Corrie Ten Boom sage had several wise thoughts regarding anxiety and worry...

**Look around and be distressed.
Look inside and be depressed.
Look at Jesus and be at rest.**