

Be Anxious for Nothing God's Prescription for Anxiety

Philippians 4:4-9

Part 3 - Let Your Requests be made known to God

Today is Prayer Sunday. That is one of the great benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection. By paying the penalty for our sins, He opened up the way to God. You remember when Jesus died how the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. That pictured how we can come directly before the throne of God with our prayers and requests to receive His grace and blessings.

On this prayer Sunday we will see how Prayer is part of

God's Prescription for Anxiety!

Philippians 4:4-9

“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.

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.”

We pray: Dear Father, send your Holy Spirit to work powerfully through Your word to give us all a greater calm and enjoyment of the “Peace of God which surpasses all understanding.” May we learn to make full use of your gift of prayer. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” See God's amazing grace in His forgiveness and His divine control of all things and rejoice in it.

“Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.” He is right beside you in every need. Therefore you can remain calm and treat others with gentleness in every situation.

These things go a long way to prevent anxiety from building in our lives. Verse 6 gives us another amazing weapon in the battle against anxiety. Remembering what God does for us is only part of the solution. He now invites us to come to Him and unload our worries and troubles on Him. Look again at verse 6. **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made**

known to God.”

Note the emphatic contrast in this verse. It contrasts “Nothing” with “Everything.” There is absolutely nothing that you ever need to be anxious about. Instead, bring everything to God in prayer.

What a perfect cure for anxiety! We can bring EVERYTHING to the Almighty Creator of the Universe. There is nothing He can’t do for us. Like our hymn says,

“Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!”

“Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer.”

So today’s theme is taken right from verse 6:

In Everything let your Requests be made known to God.

I would like each one of you to think about your own prayer life this morning. Because there are some prayer habits that we might get into that deprive us of this benefit.

I- First of all Be Specific in your prayers.

Notice the words Paul uses here. He says, “by prayer and supplication ... let your requests be made known to God.”

“**Prayer**” is a general word that describes all our communication with God. But

“**Supplication**” is much more specific. It describes one who has some need and they plead with God about that need. And then

“**Requests**” are specific things that we ask for.

So how do you pray? Do you tend to pray general prayers? Do you use a lot of memorized prayers? They can be nice but they are usually very general in nature. That type of general prayer won’t relieve any anxiety in your life. God invites us to bring specific requests to Him. Tell God what is troubling you. Tell Him what you need. Ask for specific needs. Jesus urges us, “Ask and you shall receive.” The Apostle James says, “You do not have because you do not ask.” James 4:2 Not that we should try to tell God how to help us. We leave that to Him and trust Him to do what is best.

Your prayers don’t have to be eloquent or lengthy, but be specific in describing your needs.

Do you remember when the disciples were in a boat struggling in a storm and Jesus came out to them, walking on the water. The disciples thought He was a ghost and were terrified. Immediately Jesus calmed their fear by calling out to them, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” Or literally, as we have discussed before, He said “Take heart; I AM. Stop being afraid.” The eternal I AM God was with them.

As soon as Peter heard that he said, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said, “Come.” Matthew. 14:28-29. So Peter stepped out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus! Isn’t that amazing? Peter made a specific request and Jesus enabled him to do the impossible.

As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he walked on water. But then Peter looked away

from Jesus. He shifted his attention to the fierceness of the storm around him. He began to think, wait a minute, I can't do this. He gave in to his anxiety and then he began to sink.

Peter cried out, "Lord, save me." What a perfect prayer. It wasn't eloquent, but he presented his need to Jesus. The next verse says, "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him." vs. 31. It's unthinkable that Jesus would not have saved him.

So let your requests be made known to God. He loves you dearly and it is unthinkable that He would not help. He has promised to answer all your prayers in Jesus' name. Secondly:

II- Make sure to Let Go!

Peter learned the effectiveness of prayer so he wrote in his letter, "Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7 Peter tells us to CAST our anxiety on the Lord. If you cast or throw something you can't hang on to it. If I make the motion of throwing a ball but hold on to it, I haven't actually thrown it. You have to let go to cast it. Do you ever pray like that? Do you bring your trouble or anxiety to the Lord but then not let go, do you still hang on to it? Do you pray about it and then continue to worry and be anxious about it? If you cast it on the Lord, let go. Give it to the Lord and trust Him to take care of it.

Finally Paul mentions one more important element of prayer to relieve anxiety. He says to

III- Pray with Thanksgiving.

I've always said you should begin all your prayers with thanksgiving. How can we expect to receive more from God if we are not even thankful for what He has given. But more than that, we should live a life of thanksgiving.

Thankfulness is such a powerful attitude. Studies have shown that grateful people are more empathetic people. When we are truly thankful for God's forgiveness, we will be more forgiving. When we are thankful for God's provisions we will be more caring and giving to those in need. Thankfulness causes us to sleep better, it boosts our relationships, and longevity.

Beyond that, a life of thankfulness relieves anxiety. Think about it: If you are truly thankful, then you are thinking about how God has helped you and blessed you, so that builds trust and dependence on God and reduces anxiety. We will be more ready to take it to the Lord in prayer.

One of the huge sources of anxiety is the materialism of our society. It causes financial burden and stress which is one of the main things people stress about. When you are truly thankful you will be less prone to get caught up in the mad pursuit of material things.

Gratitude saves us from a life of thinking of how great our life could be "IF ONLY" I had this or that. If only this was different in my life. Instead it leads us to thank God and praise Him that my life is great because I have Christ.

Thankfulness leads us to be satisfied and content.

Paul goes on later in this same chapter to say, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” verses 11-13

Notice Paul says, “I have **learned** in whatever state I am, to be content.” This is not something that comes naturally or something that just happens. It is something we have to learn. Paul learned to be content in every situation when he learned that with Christ he had all he needed or wanted.

Paul once prided himself in his own accomplishments. During that time he had anxiety because he was striving to make himself holy before God and was actually fighting against God and persecuting Christ. But now that Christ found him everything that seemed important to him before was like rubbish to him now. He said, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” 3:7-8. Having Christ was all that really mattered to him now. Riches didn't interest him. Fame and popularity didn't matter to him. All that mattered was having Christ. Christ was everything to Him and so he was content and thankful even when he was in prison and had nothing. He still had everything with Christ and no one could take Christ from him.

That's why many thousands of Christians were willing to die for their faith. They would rather be fed to the lions, burned at the stake, crucified, or beheaded than lose Christ. Because when they had Christ, they had everything.

That is the secret to a happy, content, anxiety free life. With Christ you have forgiveness of sins and with that you have a God who loves you one you can turn to in every need. You have a Good Shepherd to care for you. You have a wisdom that can never be equalled. And above all, you have an eternity of joy and peace with Christ in paradise. What could be greater than that?

So replace every anxious thought, with grateful thoughts. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” And you can have a joyful, anxiety free life.

Amen.

Be Anxious for Nothing

Bible Discussion

Lesson 3

Biblical Principles of Prayer and how it relieves anxiety:

1. Pray in Jesus' Name -

1. **John 14:13-14**, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."
2. **John 15:16**, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."
3. What does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name?" And how does that help reduce anxiety? *It means to pray by faith in Jesus for forgiveness, we can "come to the Father" only through Him. Only can pray when sins are forgiven. This is how we can be sure God hears and answers our prayer. In Jesus God will always hear and answer as He promises.*

2. Pray with faith -

1. **James 1:2-8**, Consider how you can count trials of various kinds to be "all joy." Think about how that attitude relieves anxiety.

It takes true wisdom to have that kind of attitude about trials. If you lack that wisdom, James urges us to pray for it.

How does he say we should pray and how will that help with our anxiety relief?

Ask in faith with no doubting. Have you ever prayed about something that you were worried about and then continued to worry about it? Is that praying in faith with no doubting? Take it to the Lord in prayer and leave it with Him.

Peter says, "Cast your anxiety on the Lord." Throw it on Him, don't hold on to it.

3. Pray according to His Will -

1. **1 John 5:14**, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."
2. What does it mean to pray "according to His will?" And how does that help reduce anxiety? *We pray as Jesus did, "Not my will, but yours be done." We always want God to do what He knows is best. We know God's will is always best.*
3. You've heard the saying, "He who dies with the most toys, wins!" We may chuckle at that, but it is only funny because that is the underlying attitude of materialism. And while we know that is sad, we tend to want to make light of it. Materialism works against God's will for us. It is like a race. It takes all your energy and focus. But it is a race you can never win. There will always be a newer nicer car or a better computer, you name it. It keeps drawing you in and

fills your life with anxiety if you chose to participate in that race. Thankfulness and contentment breathes the fresh air of God's love and sends anxiety packing.

Remember this is a man who was literally chained to a soldier guarding him 24 hours a day. He has been in this prison for 2 years. He didn't know what the outcome of his trial would be. He certainly knew what it was like to be in need. Yet He was content. He was happy. Because he was thankful.

When the heart is filled with gratitude, there is no room for anxiety, worry, or stress. They are driven away. Focus more on all the blessings God has given you and what you have in Him and. Focus more on how God has brought you through every trouble of the past and less on what the trouble is that is facing you today.

4. Pray with Thanksgiving.

What will help to boost your gratitude?

**Our Exercise Plan
For Week Three**

Monday - Read Psalm 122

Think of 5 Spiritual blessings to give thanks to God for then offer your prayer of thanks and make your requests in regard to them.

Tuesday - Read Psalm 127

Think of 5 blessings having to do with family then offer your prayer of thanks to God and make your requests in regard to them.

Wednesday - Read Genesis 32:1-12

Think of 5 worldly blessings then offer your prayer of thanks to God and make your requests in regard to them.

Thursday - Read Deuteronomy 8

Think of 5 more worldly blessings then offer your prayer of thanks to God and make your requests in regard to them.

Friday - Read Matthew 6:24-34

What are you anxious about? Offer your prayer of thanksgiving and let your requests be made known to God.