

“Dealing with Anxiety” *Philippines 4:6-9*

INTR:

Peace is a commodity that very few people in our present world know anything about. In fact, it appears that our nation is addicted to fear and anxiety. Our newscasts are filled with all the things that the media can find to make us afraid. They do this because anxiety and fear sells. That is the secret behind horror pictures and roller coasters. We love being scared to death. Eventually the thrill of fear wears off and we crave peace, but the world does not know where to find it.

God has an answer to anxiety. It is a joyous peace. This peace is available to all of those who know the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The key to peace is having the God of peace present and in control of our lives. How do we do this? The Apostle Paul told us here in **Philippians 4:6-9**. We do this through:

I. A Process to Practice (v. 6-7)

II. A Discipline for our Thoughts (v. 8-9).

I. A Process to Practice (v. 6-7)

A. ***“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6).***

This was not just a statement of a good idea. Paul actually said, they must stop being anxious about things.

1. Having commanded that they change their behavior, the Apostle then told them how they could do this. They were to substitute a positive action for negative inaction. Instead of worrying, they were to pray. The word prayer is the process of communication and communion with the living God.

2. In our praying we must begin to supplicate. Supplication means to ask God to meet specific needs. This is identifying the real source of our concern and asking for the answer to it specifically from God.

3. Finally, the Philippians and we need to ask with thanksgiving. We must rehearse for ourselves what God has done for us.

“Count Your Blessings. Name them one by one/ Count your blessings see what God has done.”

B. This is how we make our situation and needs known to God. He already knows what we need before we ask. Still, the blessing and peace comes in bringing the problem to the Lord and leaving it there.

C. There is a promise for us if we will really bring these things to Jesus. **(Philippians 4:7)**
“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

What do we do if we do not always have this peace?

II. A Discipline for our Thoughts (v. 8-9).

A. We are anxious and so we must first pray, second consider what we need, finally, we must remember what God has done for us and thank Him for it. Then we must think properly. Paul wrote in **v.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.”

1. The first things we are to think about are the true things. What are these true things? The Greek word means true as in true versus false. It can also mean that which is real. If we are going to meditate on true things, we need to not meditate on what we ruminate about but rather about the reality that God is in control of situations in our lives. We need to recite to ourselves who God is and what He has done.

2. Second, Paul tells us to meditate on that which is noble or honorable. The word speaks of someone who deserves respect. This probably refers to God and to things that point to Him.

3. Third, we are to think on things, which are righteous. We do not focus on everything that is wrong, but all that is right in God’s eyes.

4. Fourth, Paul wants us to meditate on the holy, or pure. The things that can clutter our minds should be submitted to the Lord Jesus and let Him dictate what thoughts run around in our heads. We should not tolerate the impure thoughts that the world loves for us to think about.

5. Fifth, we must think on whatever is lovely or pleasing. We must think on the things that God shows us that are lovely and pleasing, that which points to Him.

6. Sixth and seventh, we must think on that which is excellent in quality and praise worthy. These qualities are best defined by all God is and all that God does. These are all

aspects of who God is and what He wants us to become. This is to be the fodder of our thinking. Instead of ruminating we must meditate.

B. Finally, we must follow the Apostle's example (**Philippines 4:9**).

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

1. We are tempted to say that Paul is no longer here, so how can we do this? We need to remember what he said, wrote, and did.

2. Paul wrote this while locked in a Roman prison cell. He did not know whether he would live or die. Surely, if Paul could have peace in the worst possible situation by practicing these spiritual disciplines, we can have peace in the midst of our lives also.

In a world that is increasingly in turmoil, we must learn to take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there.