

Do Not Be Anxious

Written by admin

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By Cortney Whiting

Philippians 4:6-7 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

What is it that makes us so unduly concerned about everything? I try to think of myself as a laid back person, but still I fall into the trap of playing the "what if" game. It is amazing what people become anxious over: make up and hair looking perfect, the way pair of jeans fit, whether they will be accepted by the right crowd, whether their child will make it home by curfew, whether their husband will come home on time, whether their friend will make it through the illness, whether their son will come home from war. The reason for our anxiety can go from being completely trivial in nature to seemingly overwhelming. Yet, Paul had a specific teaching on how to deal with all kinds of worrisome situations.

In Philippians 4:6, Paul simply gives the command to not be anxious. This means to not have an unduly amount of concern over a certain matter. Paul is not stating that you cannot care about what is going on around you, but rather to maintain a proper outlook and not obsess over it. Fortunately, Paul does not simply tell us not to be anxious, but he also tells us how to deal with our tendency to get caught up with our concern. He tells us that in everything, by prayer and petitions, we are to present our requests to God. This means that there is no detail too minute and no problem too formidable for God.

Paul also states how we are to present our requests to God. We are to bring our requests to God in prayer with thanksgiving. This seems to be contrary to the present situation. However, when we begin to praise God, that in essence, solicits the end of our anxiety because we begin to recognize God in the present situation (Barth, Philippians, 120). We begin to give God the glory in what we are going through. We begin to place God in the center of our circumstance. The result that comes from the presentation of petition with praise is God's peace. It is not a peace that we can understand by our own understanding. It far surpasses and exceeds what we can expect, plan, or anticipate. This peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The verb to guard was used as a military term, which referenced a soldier standing guard over a city in order to keep it from being attacked (Hawthorne, Philippians, 247). Therefore, the word picture is of God's peace standing guard over our thoughts and our emotions, protecting them

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from anxiety.

We can therefore surmise that God does not want us to be anxious and gives us the tools not to be. However, it is up to us to utilize those resources by looking to God in all times, not just in situations that might cause undue concern. We must make it a practice to praise God in every situation and pray continually to Him regarding everything. When we have this upward perspective, the result is God's peace that guards our thoughts and emotions.

Cortney Whiting graduated from Berry College with a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology and graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary with a Masters of Theology, concentrating on New Testament Studies.

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