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“God’s Remedy for Anxiety”

Philippians 4:4–9

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Many people suffer from anxious, fearful, or worrisome thoughts. Life can bombard and overwhelm us at times. How can we find relief from troubling thoughts and fears? God offers help and encouragement through Paul’s letter to the Philippian church in chapter 4. If you battle fear and anxiety, come learn from God’s Word the remedy for anxiety.

1. Context

a. Joy of the Lord

i. Despite his imprisonment under Nero, Paul wrote with joy about joy.

b. Reasons to rejoice

i. God will finish what He started concerning us (**Philippians 1:6**).

ii. God will use our chains for His divine purposes (**Philippians 1:13**).

iii. To live is Christ, to die is gain (**Philippians 1:21**).

iv. Unity comes through humility; humility comes from following the example of Jesus (**Philippians 2:2–5**).

v. Our witness impacts our world (**Philippians 2:14–16**).

vi. Nothing in life compares to knowing Christ and receiving His righteousness by faith (**Philippians 3:7–11**).

vii. We can run the race and finish well (**Philippians 3:12–16**).

viii. My name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life! (**Philippians 4:3**).

2. **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.”

a. The problem

i. Joy becomes harder and comes less naturally as we age.

b. The statistics

i. 19 percent of the general adult population struggles with some form of anxiety disorder.

1. These anxiety disorders form because of genetic conditions, brain chemistry, personality, or life events.

- ii. Anxiety disorders affect 39 percent of youth aged 13–18.
 - iii. Today, youth are medicated more than ever before.
 - 1. Anti-depressant use among teens and young adults has increased 66 percent since 2020.
 - 2. The sharpest rise in anti-anxiety and anti-depression medication is among teen girls and young women aged 13–25.
 - 3. **Proverbs 12:25** – *“Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.”*
 - c. A good word for us
 - i. Paul encouraged Believers not to be anxious.
 - 1. This was not a reproof.
 - 2. This was a reminder that Believers have a reason to have peace even amid difficult circumstances.
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: What reminders of your reasons to rejoice do you place in your life?
 - ii. Our God comforts our anxious hearts.
 - 1. Paul used inverted wording to explain that the peace of God (verse 7) comes from the God of peace (verse 9).
 - 2. Paul gave more of God’s titles in 2 Corinthians.
 - 3. **2 Corinthians 1:3** – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.”*
 - 4. **DISCUSS**: What title of God do you call to mind when trying to find peace amid dark thoughts?
 - 5. **1 Peter 5:7** – *“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”*
 - a. The NIV uses the word *“anxiety.”*
 - 6. God is big enough to bear our burdens.
 - d. God’s remedy for anxiety
 - i. Paul noted two ways God encourages our anxious hearts.
 - 1. The power of prayer (**Philippians 4:6–7**)
 - 2. The medication of meditation (**Philippians 4:8–9**)
3. The power of prayer
- a. **Philippians 4:6–7** – *“[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.”*
 - b. God wants us to come to Him with *“everything.”*
 - i. There is nothing too great or small for God.
 - ii. **DISCUSS**: Is there something that you are holding back from God?
 - c. God wants us to bring all to Him by *“prayer and supplication.”*

- i. “Prayer” is **proseuchē** in the Greek, meaning “communication with God.”
 - 1. **Proseuchē** means “*communication with God*,” which can include repentance, intercession, petition, and any way in which we pour out our hearts to the Father.
 - 2. This is a broad term, emphasizing that we talk with God as a friend or loved one.
 - 3. In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus encouraged Believers to address God as “*Our Father in heaven*” (**Matthew 6:9**).
 - 4. **DISCUSS**: Do you view God as your Father and Friend? How does that affect the way you come to Him in prayer?
- ii. “Supplication” is **deēsis** in the Greek, meaning “request or petition.”
 - 1. To supplicate is to ask God for something concerning ourselves.
 - 2. David offered supplication to God often throughout the Psalms.
 - a. **Psalm 4:1** – David asked God for mercy.
 - b. **Psalm 5:8** – David asked God for guidance.
 - c. **Psalm 6:4** – David asked God for deliverance from his enemies.
 - d. **Psalm 34:4** – David asked God for deliverance from fear.
 - 3. Hannah offered supplication to God for a son.
- d. God wants us to approach Him “*with thanksgiving*.”
 - i. We can be so busy asking God for stuff that we forget to thank Him.
 - 1. God does not want a relationship with us based on supply and demand, but one based on love.
 - 2. **DISCUSS**: Examine what you say to God in prayer. What is your relationship with Him based on? How can you improve your relationship with God?
 - ii. We can thank God for all He has already done for us, even if He never does another thing for us.
 - iii. We can thank God for who He is, and for all He has done for us.
 - 1. **DISCUSS**: How can we thank God for being who He is? What are your favorite attributes of God and why?
 - iv. We can thank God before our petitions are answered, trusting Him to act for our good and His glory.
 - 1. Sometimes God blesses us by not giving us what we asked for.
 - 2. **DISCUSS**: Do you thank God even when He says “no”? When has God’s “no” been a blessing in disguise?
- e. God wants to give us His peace.
 - i. God wants His peace to “*guard our hearts and minds*” (**Philippians 4:7**).

- ii. As we labor with God in prayer, God can give us a peace that “surpasses understanding” (**Philippians 4:7**).
 - 1. We must make time to pray if we want to have God’s peace.
 - 2. Instead of responding to stress by going to Google or chatting with friends, first go to the Lord in prayer.
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: Do you seek peace from the God of peace? When have you felt the surpassing peace of God?

- 4. The medication of meditation
 - a. **Philippians 4:8–9** – “[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.”
 - b. Defining meditation
 - i. Paul was not speaking of the meditation associated with Eastern mysticism and transcendentalism.
 - ii. The transcendentalism association of the word “meditation” is why some translations say “think” instead of “meditate.”
 - iii. But the word “meditate” is a common Bible word, and it appears in the Psalms in every Bible translation.
 - 1. **Psalms 1:1–2** – “[1] Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.”
 - 2. **Psalms 77:12** – “I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.”
 - 3. **Psalms 119:148** – “My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word.”
 - iv. Meditate is **hāgâ** in the Hebrew.
 - v. Meditate is **logizomai** in the Greek.
 - 1. **Logizomai** means “to ponder, to consider, and to focus the mind and heart.”
 - 2. “Meditate” is a stronger word than “think.”
 - c. **2 Corinthians 10:5** – “. . . casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”
 - i. The main battleground for anxiety, fear, and worry is in the mind.
 - 1. In general, we must fight the tendency to think the worst.

2. Because of this, Paul gave us eight things to meditate on instead of our fears.
- ii. **Philippians 4:8** calls us to think on what is
1. True
 - a. Satan attacks us with lies about God, ourselves, and others.
 - b. In an age of conspiracies, conjectures, and speculations, we can fall back on the truth of God's Word.
 - c. **DISCUSS**: How has God's Word anchored you in a world full of gossip and confusion?
 2. Noble
 - a. The NLT says, "*honorable.*"
 - b. God wants us to meditate on what is worthy of honor or respect.
 3. Just
 - a. The NIV says, "*right.*"
 - b. God wants us to meditate on what is upright and virtuous.
 4. Pure
 - a. The Greek word translated "*pure*" is **hagnos**, meaning "things that are sacred and holy."
 5. Lovely
 - a. God wants us to meditate on what is beautiful and pleasant.
 6. Of good report
 - a. The NIV says, "*admirable,*" meaning reputable.
 7. Virtuous
 - a. God wants us to meditate on what is morally excellent.
 8. Praiseworthy
 - a. God wants us to meditate on what is commendable and uplifting.
 9. **DISCUSS**: Can these words describe your thoughts? How do you determine what thoughts you allow to linger and what thoughts you push away by God's grace?
 10. **DISCUSS**: Which of these eight things to ponder has God brought to your attention? What thoughts do you currently entertain that are contrary to that way of thinking?
- iii. Paul modeled these eight ways of thinking he recommended.
1. **Philippians 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.*"

2. Paul had reason to be anxious because his life was constantly in danger.
 3. But Paul had the joy and peace of God despite his troubles, and he is our model on how to handle our anxieties.
 4. **DISCUSS:** How is your way of thinking evident in how you behave?
- iv. Rather than allowing our minds to gravitate to darkness, we must take our thoughts “captive” for Christ by meditating on His Word.
1. When Joshua was taking over for Moses, God told him to read Scripture to gain courage and peace.
 2. **Joshua 1:8** – *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”* (1984 NIV)
- d. The ninth reason to rejoice
- i. Through prayer and meditation, God’s peace will calm our anxious hearts (**Philippians 4:6–9**).

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)