

“Anxious for NOTHING!”

Philippians 4:4-8

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In 2024, 43% of U.S. adults reported feeling more anxious than the previous year, an increase from 37% in 2023 and 32% in 2022.

“Worry pulls tomorrow's cloud over today's sunshine.”

C. Swindoll, Questions Christians Ask, p. 18.

“The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

George Muller

Because I rejoice in Jesus!

Philippians 4:4-5 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.”

- *Rejoice in the Lord* –
 - Notice the double emphasis on ‘*Rejoicing*.’
 - We are to rejoice IN the LORD!
 - **Psalm 5:11-12** ¹¹ But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. ¹² For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.”
- *We are to keep our eyes on Jesus and on the eternal.*
 - **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

- Paul's '*light affliction*'
 - **2 Corinthians 11:23b-28** ²³...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”
- *Be gentle to all* –
 - I will admit that it is difficult to be gentle to everyone when I am anxious.
 - I cannot control the thing that causes anxiety, but I can control the way I respond to it.
 - How often do we use stress as an excuse for our bad behavior?
 - We get short with people, we snap and when called out for it, say we are stressed.
- *The Lord is at hand* –
 - **James 5:7-8** ⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”
 - Let your gentleness be known to all and establish your heart, the Lord is at hand!
 - HE is coming SOON!!

Because I have taken it to the Father!

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.”

- *Anxious* –
 - *“The Greek word translated “anxious” (careful) in Philippians 4:6 means “to be pulled in different directions.” Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart! The Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means “to strangle.”*¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 94). Victor Books.
 - *“From the spiritual point of view, worry is wrong thinking (the mind) and wrong feeling (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things. Worry is the greatest thief of joy.”*¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 94). Victor Books.
 - *Do you think it is possible to think rightly about any situation when you are filled with anxiety?*
- **Matthew 6:27** *“Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”*
 - Jesus is asking if there is any positive benefit to worrying.
 - There isn’t one single benefit to worrying, but there are several studies that show the opposite is true.
- **Proverbs 12:25** *“Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.”*

Several studies suggest that negative thinking patterns—such as meditation, worry, and cynicism—can have detrimental effects on the body. Here are some key findings:

1. Chronic Stress & Cortisol Dysregulation

- **Study:** A study published in *Psychoneuroendocrinology* found that persistent negative thinking increases cortisol levels, leading to chronic stress.
- **Impact:** Elevated cortisol can weaken the immune system, increase blood pressure, and contribute to weight gain and metabolic disorders.

2. Faster Aging

- **Study:** Research from the University of California, San Francisco, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, found

that chronic stress and negative thinking are linked to shorter telomeres (protective caps on chromosomes).

- **Impact:** Shorter telomeres accelerate biological aging and increase the risk of age-related diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

3. Cardiovascular Health & Hypertension

- **Study:** A study in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* showed that chronic worry and negative emotions increase the risk of heart disease.
- **Impact:** Negative thinking contributes to high blood pressure, arterial inflammation, and a higher risk of heart attacks and strokes.

- **Matthew 6:25-34** ²⁵ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁸ “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? ³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **(THE KEY)** ³³ **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.”
- **Luke 12:29-31** ²⁹ “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. ³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”
 - Don’t focus on the problem, but the One who has the solutions.

- *Prayer/Supplication/Thanksgiving –*
 - *“The answer to anxiety is prayer. **“Prayer”** (proseuchē) denotes the petitioner’s attitude of mind as worshipful. **“Petition”** (deēsei) denotes prayers as expressions of need. **“Thanksgiving”** (eucharistias) should accompany all Christian praying, as the supplicant acknowledges that whatever God sends is for his good. It may also include remembrance of previous blessings. **“Requests”** (aitēmata) refers to the things asked for.”*¹ Kent, H. A., Jr. (1981). *Philippians*. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon* (Vol. 11, p. 152). Zondervan Publishing House.
- *Let your requests be made known to God –*
 - Whatever is bothering you
 - **Psalm 55:1-3** ¹ Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. ² Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, ³ Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me, ⁴ My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. ⁵ Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. ⁶ So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. ⁷ Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness...**Psalm 55:22** “...Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.”
- *The peace that surpasses –*
 - *“For the peace of God not only suffices but far surpasses human comprehension. It acts as a sentry to guard the believer’s heart (a biblical symbol for the personality in which the mind resides) and the believer’s thoughts from all anxiety and despair.”*¹ Kent, H. A., Jr. (1981). *Philippians*. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon* (Vol. 11, p. 152). Zondervan Publishing House.
 - **Isaiah 26:3** “You will keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”

- *Keep your eyes on the one who presides OVER your circumstances, not ON your circumstances. He will provide protection around you!*
 - **Matthew 14:28-33** “²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” ²⁹ So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”
 - **John 14:27** “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
 - **Colossians 3:15a** “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,..”
- *Will guard your heart and mind –*
 - *Guard* – to keep under guard as with a garrison.
 - *Heart* – the seat of rational function, the seat of mental or spiritual powers and capacities.
 - **Proverbs 4:23** “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life.”
 - *Mind* – thoughts.
- Worry, anxiety, and fear result from not trusting the Lord or allowing something perceived or actual to rule in our thought life.
- Paul directs us to take that thing to Jesus.
- The result is a mind and heart protected from loose thoughts which provides peace.

Because I have changed my focus!

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.”

- We learned what we should not focus on, and now Paul, by the Holy Spirit, shows us what we should focus on.
 - Whatever things are lovely, of good report, anything virtuous and praiseworthy.

When you find yourself worrying...

1. STOP THAT THOUGHT PROCESS

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** “³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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...”
 - **Stop that negative thought process and take it to God!**

2. RE-DIRECT

- Re-direct through prayer your focus back on the Lord, who has a plan for your life.
 - Trust IN Him because He is worthy of your trust.

3. INITIATE GOOD THINKING

- Is it true?
- Is it Noble (Honest)?
- Is it Just (Right, Righteous)?
- Is it Pure?
- Is it Lovely?
- Whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue (excellence), if there is anything praiseworthy.
- **MEDITATE** – “to reckon,” whether by calculation or imputation Think on, but more to reckon, “*Do the Math!*”
 - God is in control, and God loves you!

- **1 Peter 5:7** “...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”
- **Matthew 7:7-11** “⁷ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”
- **Psalms 119:15-16** “¹⁵ I will *meditate on Your precepts*, and contemplate Your ways. ¹⁶ I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”
- **Psalms 119:27-28** “²⁷ Make me understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I meditate on Your wonderful works. ²⁸ My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word.”
- **Psalms 143:5-6** “⁵ I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. ⁶ I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land.

Let's leave tonight with the words of Jesus (stand and read together)

Matthew 6:33-34 “³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.”