

Anxious for Nothing Week 2: Ask God for Help

Review:

- Reminder: some anxiety cannot be dealt with with just a spiritual answer, but the brain is complicated. Medicine is good when used correctly.
- We live in an anxious, stressed out world.
- The *Hardwired to Connect* study says we are dealing with unprecedented mental illness amongst children in America, and that Americans are more stressed than the rest of the world.
- The statistic that bothered me the most from Max Lucado's book was that anxiety for children today is at the same level as psychiatric patients in the 1950s.
 - Why? Some reasons might be: broken family units, divorce, lack of immediate family in an area, lack of stable relationships, issues with the kinds of food we eat, and the media culture.
- Bottom line: wherever darkness prevails as a culture, people get hurt.

Jeremiah 6:16–17 (NIV) ¹⁶This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ¹⁷I appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’”

Here, we are dealing with the spiritual issues concerning anxiety—not the physical ones.

Paul, in the book of Philippians, is dealing with many of the same things.

- A post-resurrection Christian leader
- Writing to Christians who are stressed out—why?
- His old teammates (the Jews) have sought to destroy his reputation.
- He willingly lost all of his status and possessions and probably even his wife.
- He is in jail for preaching. He's in a dungeon, chained to a wall.
- While he is in jail, those with false motives are attempting to sneak into the church.

Philippians 1:12–26 (NIV) ¹²Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

- **His statement thought out: Rejoice in the Lord!**
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Notice his attitude concerning his spiritual children. (We get so worried about ours.)

- Those who mean to cause him trouble can still be used by God.
- Jesus will continue the work that Paul started (to point people to Jesus) even when Paul doesn't know it or see it.
 - **Philippians 1:6** (NIV) being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Notice, concerning his work, that he could be down because he is not succeeding as he sees it. Instead...

- The gospel is not chained. Jesus is working.
- He has work to do right where he is.
- He is writing when he would otherwise not be. God has plans for what he is writing.
 - **2 Timothy 2:8b-9** (NIV) ⁸... Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.

Notice he could be concerned about his life. He very well could die, but... to live is Christ and to die is gain.

His secret? C. A. L. M.

Philippians 4:4-13 (NIV) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. ¹⁰I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

C: Celebrate God. Rejoice in the Lord, Rejoice in the Lord.

- It's a choice ,not a feeling. Choose to rejoice in who God is and what HE has done.
- Paul is saying that God has and is working all of this out for eternal good. He is sovereign, He is good, He is near.

Ephesians 1:7-10 (NIV) ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

A: Ask God for help.

- He knows me personally. I can call out to Him, Abba, Father.
- Notice Paul is writing this to the church in Philippi: pray together.

Discussion questions for home, or Life Group:

Choose a passage from the sermon or consider: Philippians 4:5, 6 & Luke 18:1-8

1. Share what was significant to you from the sermon.
2. How is your view of what God is like impacting you seeking His help?
3. As we have been talking about anxiety, what "worry patterns" have you become aware of? A) Do you tend to bring your concerns, specifically, to God?
4. Share a time when you asked for help (or didn't), particularly when feeling anxious. A) As you listen to each other, what are you discovering about anxiety and asking for help?
5. What help do you need to ask of God? (Also consider if you need to ask others for help.)

Practical step: Intentionally spend time daily in prayer both petitioning and thanking.

BONUS: Read Philippians 4:4-8 several times this week. Begin to memorize it.