

## **Prayer** **Philippians 4:6-7**

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“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

Now there's a challenge. To be careful, that is to be full of anxious care over nothing. Is that possible? Well, look at the context.

There was an equally stiff challenge given in verse 4: “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). Rejoice at all times, in all circumstances, under all conditions. Then he gives the challenge to patiently bear any affliction and to enjoy the good times of life in a steady, tranquil spirit. Why?

Because the Lord is at hand; He is with us, nearer than our closest friend. The lifestyle of Jesus did not have those violent ups and downs that can often characterize our daily walk. He left us an example; he moved through life manifesting neither abject despair when things went wrong, nor giddy light-heartedness when things went well.

So the call to rejoice has its origin and termination in God. Then he says in light of all of that, be full of anxious care over nothing.

Jesus had taught the same thing on an earlier occasion: “Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Therefore, take no thought saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or, with what shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:25-34).

There are two kinds of care. One is the care of wise planning and prudence. The other is the care of distrust which only leads to a burdened heart and sorrowful spirit. He then goes on to show us how to live above it. “In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.”

As an antidote to worry he prescribes a lifestyle of constant prayer. I am a firm believer in having stated times of prayer, but here is the exhortation to pray when things burden our spirit; to pray when we need direction and strength. Naturally we must mix thanksgiving with our supplications as a bold statement to God that we believe the answer is on the way.

What is the result of it all? “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God wants to infuse our troubled lives with His peace. He wants to surprise our troubled hearts with a blessed transfusion of peace.

When that happens, others who know your situation and circumstance will not understand how you can be a peace in the midst of tumult. You may not understand it yourself. That's why it is called the peace that passes understanding.

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