

How To Win Over Worry

(Philippians 4:1-9)

by John Paul Miller

INTRODUCTION:

If anyone had a cause to worry it was Paul the Apostle.

- 1) His Beloved Christian friends weren't getting along (vs. 1).
- 2) Two women were disputing (vs. 2).
- 3) False Teachers had invaded their fellowship (3:2).
- 4) Paul himself was in prison, and his future was uncertain.

Yes Paul, it would seem, had every reason to worry yet he did not!

Why?

Paul had a "secure mind" (vs. 7) – When you have a secure mind the Peace of God guards you and the God of Peace guides you! (vs. 9)

Also, Paul had joy **in the Lord** (vs. 4-5). It's sad but true that many Christians today lose their joy and peace because of worry!

Some psychologists claim that only 8 percent of a person's Worries are legitimate. They assert that 40 percent of such Anxieties will never happen, that 30 percent are undue self-criticism, that 12 percent are about old decisions, and that 10 percent pertain to health and aging.

What is Worry?

The Greek word translated "careful" (vs. 6) means "to be pulled in different directions." Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us in the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart!

Our English word "worry" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means "to strangle"

Worry is (vs. 7):

Wrong thinking – the mind

Wrong feelings – the heart

About God, circumstances, people, and things. Thus we need the “single mind” (circumstances), the “submissive mind” (people), and the “Spiritual mind” (things).

How to conquer worry?

The answer is “the secure mind”.

In order to have a secure mind I must meet the conditions Paul lays down in Philippians 4:6-9:

1. Right Praying (vs. 6-7)

The Living Bible tells us: “don’t worry about anything”
(Greek: present, active, imperative)

BUT “pray about everything”.

Big things, small things

He’s your loving heavenly father (Matthew 6)

Notice Paul didn’t just say, “Pray about it”. He tells us how to pray!

It’s not just praying it’s “right praying”.

How to Pray:

1. Adoration (vs. 6) - it’s love enjoying the presence of God and honoring Him in worship.

The best way to get rid of worry is to worship! To realize that He is big enough to solve my problems.

Meditate on God!

2. Supplication (vs. 6) - it’s earnest, sincere praying from the heart.

Illustration: Jesus praying in the garden? (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46)

“not carnal energy but spiritual intensity”.

Warren W. Wiersbe

3. Appreciation (vs. 6) – our father in heaven loves to hear his Children thank Him.

Illustration: The 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19)

Thank Him in faith before the answer comes!

The Result of right praying (vs. 7) - “The Peace of God”

Isaiah 26:3 – “thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.”

Contrast:

Peace with God – salvation

Peace of God – sanctification

“a little faith will take your soul to heaven, a lot of faith will bring heaven to your soul.”

D.L. Moody

God’s Peace:

1. Transcends all understanding (vs. 7)

- a) It’s foreign to the unsaved
- b) Unexplained by the saved

Jesus said, “My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.” - John 14:27

2. Keeps your hearts (vs. 7) – Lit: “guards”

Remember, Paul was in a prison guarded by a Roman Soldier!

God’s peace stands guard to keep anxiety from our minds and hearts.

Illustration: Daniel (Dan 6) prayed; gave thanks before God, and made supplication thus, he slept in the lions den!

Notice the King's situation in the same chapter – He worried and had no peace!

3. Is through Jesus (vs. 7)

1 Peter 5:7 – “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

2. Right Thinking (vs. 8) – “think on these things”.

Remember peace involves both the “heart” and the “mind”.

Isaiah 26:3 – “thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.”

The Key: negative anxiety must be replaced by positive habits.

After praying a believer must get his or her mind involved in right thinking.

Paul tells us what to think about (“*think on these things*”):

Paul's focus is on the object of our thoughts:

1. Whatever is True or Truthful - as opposed to falsehood and error

Jesus said, “I am the truth”, so anything that does not correspond in thought, word, and deed to Jesus Christ is to be put out of our lives!

2. Whatever is Honest or Noble - it signifies worthy, of reverence, and respect.

If it's not respectable don't think about it!

3. Whatever is Just or Right - in relation to God and man.

How do we ascertain what is Just or Right? The Bible!

4. Whatever is Pure – it's not moral purity, it's unstained by evil of any kind.

5. Whatever is Lovely – it's ethically beautiful and attractive.

It brings peace and rest.

6. Whatever is of Good Report – that which contains no immoral or sexually suggestive innuendo.

If there is any “Virtue” and any “Praise” – think on these things.

“If it has (*virtue*) it will motivate us to do better; and if it has (*praise*) it is worth commending to others. No Christian can afford to waste “mind power” on thoughts that tear him down or that would tear others down if these thoughts were shared.”

Warren W. Wiersbe

Are you thinking right?

Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God!

Psalm 119:165 – “Great peace have they which love thy law . . .”

However, it’s not enough to use the Bible as a basis for praying right, and thinking right; we must also, live right

3. Right Living (vs. 9)

You cannot experience the Peace of God in your heart and mind when you are living in disobedience to the God of Peace.

Sin always brings unrest

Purity results in peace

Notice Paul balanced four activities:

learned and *received* and *heard* and *seen* (notice the difference)

Paul said, “DO!” are you?

James 1:22 – “be ye doers of the word and not hearers only . . .”

Pray Right

Think Right

Live Right

Philippians 4 is the Peace chapter of the New Testament and James 4 is the War chapter.

James begins with a question: “from whence come wars and fighting’s among you?”

He then goes on to explain the causes of war:

1. Wrong Praying – “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask not . . . “
2. Wrong Thinking – “purify your hearts ye double-minded. . . “
3. Wrong Living – “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God.”

Paul’s closing promise (vs. 9b) - “*The God of peace will be with you.*”

Worry is sin and it produces doubt in these directions:

1. God’s love is doubted
2. God’s wisdom
3. God’s power

You have the Peace of God to guard you

You have the God of Peace to guide you

So, Why Worry?