



Reach Out to God in Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7

Message Notes by Dr. Mark Platt

Trouble often causes worry and anxiety. When worry and anxiety come into a Christian's life, then that Christian is confronted with a choice: Do I keep on worrying or do I pray?

When God inspired the Apostle Paul to write to the Christians in Philippi, he was not writing from an ivory-tower or a palatial paradise. Paul was old and in failing health. Paul under house-arrest in Rome. Paul was awaiting trial for made-up crimes he never did. Paul awaited his appearance before Nero, the cruel Roman Emperor. Paul was uncertain whether he could be released or executed. Yet, Paul is not worried or afraid!

As Paul wrote Philippians, he had a choice worry or pray. In verse 6, God inspired Paul to write this: ***“Do not be anxious about anything.”*** Paul chose to reach out to God in prayer! In fact, verses 6-7 are a command from God not to worry but they are also a command to pray!

Here in these two verses, Paul gives us **five instructions** from God about your prayer-life:

- 1. Pray about everything** *“but in everything, by prayer”*
Psalm 55:22; Psalm 62:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 5:7
- 2. Pray with supplication** *“and petition”*
Psalm 34:6; Psalm 55:16-17; Psalm 68:19; Psalm 119:170
- 3. Pray with thanksgiving** *“with thanksgiving”*
1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 100:4; Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 4. Pray with submission** *“present your requests to God”*
Isaiah 55:9; Psalm 68:19; Mark 11:24; Proverbs 19:21; 1 John 5:14-15
- 5. Pray to receive peace** *“And the peace of God ... ”*
Isaiah 26:3; Proverbs 24:10; John 14:27; Colossians 3:15

Your Response:

1. Be honest: Do you have a prayer-life? Are you spending a minimum of 15 minutes each day in prayer? What needs to be eliminated from your daily schedule so that you can pray more?
2. As you reflect on the challenge, “*Be anxious for nothing,*” are there things you are worrying about? What are they? What is God telling you to do about it?
3. Do you honestly care about the things you are praying for? Do you pray with earnestness? Is there supplication in your prayer life? Why or why not?
4. Do you have inner turmoil and fear? Are you fixated on your worries? Do you lose sleep due to worrying? Why don't you have the “*peace*” that is promised in verse 7? What do you need to do differently?
5. Start a new habit of spending several minutes a day in prayer: praising God for His goodness, thanking Him for all your blessings, confessing your sins, remembering others' needs in prayer, and praying your needs, problems, and hurts.
6. Consider starting Brother Lawrence's plan and practice the presence of God.

Resources:

The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer
The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence
Paul's Letter to the Philippians by Gordon D. Fee
Prayer by Ole Hallesby
With Christ in the School of Prayer by Andrew Murray
Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference by Philip Yancy
The Epistle to the Philippians by R.C.H. Lenski