

ANXIETY - PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

¹⁻³ Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- **Euodia & Syntyche:** We don't know who these women are other than what's stated. He loved them and needed them to practice what he's already instructed the church:
 - **Philippians 2:2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
 - Clearly it was important for them to get along. It's implied it would hurt the congregation. We all play a significant part, don't we? We need to remember the big picture: we're laboring side by side for the sake of Christ. Learn to let things go and refocus. Paul doesn't take sides. He asks them to get back together.
- **True Companion:** "and I ask also thee, genuine yoke-fellow" (YLT) Some say it could be a "Syzygus", a proper name driven from the Greek word yokefellow, but some argue it hasn't been proven. So, we're not sure who it is. Epaphroditus? Probably not Timothy since they he couldn't come just yet. What about Silas, Luke or Barnabas? We're just not sure. Whoever it was, they would have all understood.
- **Clement:** We don't know anything else about Clement either, but he was important to Paul. Could it have been Clement of Rome? Not sure.
- **The Book of Life:** it's the one that counts. It doesn't matter if others don't know you or write about you if the Lord does!

⁴⁻⁷ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- **For your consideration:** don't read the following as a suggestion, but as a prescription for joy and peace in this life which is filled with trials and tribulations. Do you have to do it? Why would you not? Read the following as a reality. You can rejoice. You can be reasonable. You can live without anxiety taking over. You can and must be thankful in prayer. God's peace will guard your minds and heart. Do you believe this? If you don't . . . do you believe it will work? Will not disbelieve hinder what God is offering? Also, keep in mind their setting. Roman colony. "*You can have your own religion, but keep it outside the city gates*" kind of mentality. They have been persecuted and continue to suffer for Christ.
- **Rejoice:** Do you like to be told to rejoice when you feel overwhelmed or anxious? I think most can sympathize (and some people don't have the greatest tact when talking to those who are suffering), yet Paul is doubling down. This is why it's good to study, because you

can read this on your own instead of having someone say it to you. It softens the blow, but you hear what needs to be said. Paul can't get over this rejoice thing, can he? Must be pretty important - to learn how to rejoice even during trials. Remember **1:27-30**.

- We rejoice in the Lord. There's a connection. Could it be that we don't rejoice because we're not connected?
- **Reasonableness:** Gentle is how its translated in the NASB & NKJV. Has the idea of being big hearted. Willing to take the loss, etc. Have you ever found yourself to be unreasonable? Ever had an unreasonable parent or spouse? Child? Friend? It's extremely frustrating. The body needs reasonable people. That requires individuals to be aware and care. It requires honestly and humility. A reasonable person is a treasure.
 - It's the same word used in **James 3:17** when speaking about wisdom from above. It paints a wonderful picture.
 - **James 3:17-18** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
 - Just because things may be bad doesn't give us the right to change our behavior. Brethren, the world is watching us and isn't as forgiving. How can we persuade them to know Christ, if after getting to know us, they see someone who isn't at peace like the rest of the world? What kind of pull is that?
- **Lord is at hand:** Can carry the idea of proximity or time. In other words, he's either saying that Christ is close to them or is close to coming back to them. Perhaps he's using a word that can communicate both ideas simultaneously? The wanting of things to end quickly is not unique or wrong. The tendency to feel alone when suffering isn't unique either. Paul wants them to be comforted. There is security knowing that God's promises are secure: Jesus will come again and He was with the brethren. We don't always see Jesus standing by the Father's side like Stephen did, but brethren, He's there.
- **Anxious:** to be apprehensive, have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned. Unduly means "in an inappropriate, unjustifiable, or improper manner." Remember, Paul had daily anxieties - see **2 Corinthians 11:28**. It's taking about an anxiety that distracts and/or pulls you away from Him.
- **Prayer:** Being anxious without action doesn't help. You know what does? Prayer.
 - **1 Peter 5:6-7** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.
 - Put it in His hands and stop monitoring it. Leave it to Him and move on. Throw it to the Lord. It actually carries the idea of giving the responsibility to the Lord.
 - **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."
 - He guards your heart and mind, but doesn't necessarily deliver you from the situation. God can bless you in the middle of a storm.

- The New American Commentary: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon points out that the peace of God "is divine peace," which does not require "a situation where circumstances [are] changed or external needs [are] met."
- Read **Psalm 55**. Consider what this looks like practically.
 - David was anxious and frustrated, but it's what he did with it.
- It's not that we're never anxious. Paul was anxious, but we've got to be careful and choose wisely. Jesus makes that point in Matthew 6 about anxiety. God provides what we need. There are already troubles in this world, so we don't need to add to that list. As I heard one man say "Many times people are busy with things that are none of your business".
- With Thankfulness! Maybe the prayers aren't effective, because we're praying only because we should, but not because we want to with thanksgiving? Legitimate thankfulness - what if it's lacking?
- **Disappointed?** Is this answer not what you're looking for? If so, why is that? Were we hoping for something more powerful? Cleaner rivers to wash in? What if the problem isn't the answer, but our lack of confidence in prayer? I'm only asking. What if we struggle because we don't God will act or we simply don't ask? (**James 1:5-8; 4:1-2**).
 - Have you ever truly cast your anxieties on the Lord? Make them His responsibility? God is saying that if something is pulling you away from Me, then talk to Me about it. We should do that in our families, marriages, and friendships. Confront, don't run from it all.

⁸⁻⁹ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- **Mindset:** Excerpt from a professional counseling book:
 - Enhancing, Positive Thought Patterns and Strengthening Connections: Deep Limbic System (*tied to emotions and memory* - SB) Prescriptions
 - Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. Philippians 4:8
 - Many times we're frustrated because we're told what NOT to do, without instruction of what TO do. Just as we parent our children: simply saying "no" without giving clear expectation and guidance is worthless and will cause further frustration.
 - Paul said we need to preoccupy our minds with these virtues. Just as the body follows the head in combat, so it is with spiritual warfare. Our actions stem from our thoughts.
- **Practice & Peace:** It's when we put these truths into action that we have the peace of God and God Himself with us. We're blessed in our doing. You've finished your prayer, not it's your part.

- We cannot walk in sin and have God and His peace with us, brethren. We must follow Paul's example.