

## Advancing Through Anxiety Series

September 10, 2025

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9, James 1:2, Daniel 3:17-18, Psalms 121:4

Summary: Paul gives us the antidote to worry, and he calls us to think right, pray right, and live right, as we live lives victorious for Christ.

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7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

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But what if sometimes we turn too quickly to the pill bottle and too slowly to the Lord?

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**From today’s scripture, I want to suggest three ways to advance through our anxiety.**

**First, we need to ...**

### **1. Think right.**

**Paul says in verse 4 to rejoice. And to make sure we don’t miss it, he says it twice: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”**

**Philippians is all about joy; Paul uses the word some 16 times! When he says here to rejoice “always,” that suggests joy is more than an emotion, for you cannot command an emotion. You cannot force someone to be happy; they either are, or they aren’t.**

**But Paul tells us to rejoice always. Joy, then, must be a decision. Someone said, “Happiness comes from happenings, but joy comes from Jesus.”**

**Actually, joy is an act of faith. It supposes that, regardless of how things look, God is still on the throne, God loves me, God is for me, and even though God may not deliver me, God will see me through. That’s why James could write, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2). He knew God can use trials for good, to build our character. And that’s why Daniel’s three friends could defy King Nebuchadnezzar with confident joy, stating, “Our God can deliver us from the fiery furnace. But even if he does not, we will not serve your gods” (see Daniel 3:17-18).**

**Thinking right begins with choosing joy. The Philippians knew Paul lived this out. When he first visited their city, he had cast out a demon and inadvertently upset a money-making scheme, so the unhappy businessmen had him falsely charged, beaten, and thrown into prison, along with his buddy Silas. You can read the story in Acts chapter 16. Sitting in their jail cell at night, they could have had a royal pity party. Instead, they opted for a worship service! Wounded and behind bars, they sang hymns! And God sent**

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**Paul gives us examples of what to think about in verse 8. He says to train our mind toward the positive, to focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable; to think about things that are excellent or praiseworthy. You are what you think. While every sin begins first with a thought, so does every act of obedience.**

**Various people have been attributed to writing the poem:**

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## **2. Pray right.**

**Verses 6 and 7 are two of my favorite Bible verses. The New Living Translation sums them up nicely with, “Don’t worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything!”**

**We’re all good at worrying, but sometimes we feel ill-prepared to pray. Yet, if you know how to worry, you know how to pray. Worrying is talking to yourself about things outside your control. Praying is talking to God about things outside your control.**

**Oswald Chambers wrote, “All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God.” When the anxiety level starts rising, talk to God about it.**

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**Parents want their children to humbly ask, and the Heavenly Father wants his children to come to him with their needs.**

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**Follow the advice of 1 Peter 5:7, which says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” Trust that God cares for you and is at work in your situation. And begin to act on faith that God will direct your steps forward.**

Someone once said, “If your knees are shaking, kneel on them.” Instead of worrying, why not try praying? Maybe God will take your problem away. But even if He doesn’t, you will gain perspective. You will see God for who he is and your problem for what it is.

The “START” Bible says, “If you have a big God, then you have a relatively small problem. But if you have a big problem, then maybe you have a small god.” [NKJV, Start: The Bible for New Believers, Thomas Nelson, 1227.] The giant Goliath looked at the shepherd boy David and saw a small problem. But David looked at Goliath and saw a large God ... along with a target too big to miss!

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Think right and pray right, and then lastly,

### 3. Live right!

This is the Nike principle: “Just do it!” Put your thoughts and your prayers into action. Verse 5 describes how we should live with “gentleness.” Other Bible versions describe it as gracious, reasonable, moderate, considerate, content, generous, lenient, patient, forgiving, calm. The idea is to live with graciousness out of a humble spirit. You don’t always have to get your way. You are willing to yield your rights to another.

Now why would anyone want to yield their rights to another? The rest of verse 5 tells us: because the Lord is near. The Christian believer has the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, within them 24/7. Wherever you go, Jesus goes with you. You are never alone; the Lord is nearby.

But there is also an end times application here: Jesus is coming soon! His return draws nearer every day. All of the New Testament urges us to be ready, for he may come at any moment. So, live the way he wants you to live now.

**In verse 9, Paul urges the good folks of First Church, Philippi to follow his example: not only what he says but also what he does.**

**I learned early on that my kids will follow my actions a lot faster than they will my words. Despite what I say, it is what I do that counts. Words are cheap. Actions matter. So, put it into practice! Think right. Pray right. And live right. And Paul promises us, “The God of peace will be with you.” Joe Quatrone writes, “With the peace of God to guard us and the God of peace to guide us—why worry?”**

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### Advancing through Anxiety

Tonight, we'll look at replacing anxiety with God's peace.

We are an anxious nation.

Scientific American magazine reports that 1 in 6 Americans take a psychiatric drug. Anxiety meds are second only to depression meds. I believe meds used carefully are a gift from God.

But what if sometimes we turn too quickly to the pill bottle and too slowly to the Lord?

**It was Mark Twain who joked, “I’ve suffered a great many catastrophes in my life. Most of them never happened.”**

**Or maybe you identify with the person who said, “I don’t have a nervous system. I am a nervous system!”**

**From today’s scripture, I want to suggest three ways to advance through our anxiety.**

**First, we need to ...**

### **1. Think right.**

**Paul says in verse 4 to rejoice. And to make sure we don’t miss it, he says it twice: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”**

**Philippians is all about joy; Paul uses the word some 16 times! When he says here to rejoice “always,” that suggests joy is more than an emotion, for you cannot command an emotion. You cannot force someone to be happy; they either are, or they aren’t.**

**But Paul tells us to rejoice always. Joy, then, must be a decision. Someone said, “Happiness comes from happenings, but joy comes from Jesus.”**

**Actually, joy is an act of faith. It supposes that, regardless of how things look, God is still on the throne, God loves me, God is for me, and even though God may not deliver me, God will see me through. That’s why James could write, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2). He knew God can use trials for good, to build our character. And that’s why Daniel’s three friends could defy King Nebuchadnezzar with confident joy, stating, “Our God can deliver us from the fiery furnace. But even if he does not, we will not serve your gods” (see Daniel 3:17-18).**

**Thinking right begins with choosing joy. The Philippians knew Paul lived this out. When he first visited their city, he had cast out a demon and inadvertently upset a money-making scheme, so the unhappy businessmen had him falsely charged, beaten, and thrown into prison, along with his buddy Silas. You can read the story in Acts chapter 16. Sitting in their jail cell at night, they could have had a royal pity party. Instead, they opted for a worship service! Wounded and behind bars, they sang hymns! And God sent**

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**Paul gives us examples of what to think about in verse 8. He says to train our mind toward the positive, to focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable; to think about things that are excellent or praiseworthy. You are what you think. While every sin begins first with a thought, so does every act of obedience.**

**Various people have been attributed to writing the poem:**

**Sow a thought, reap a word.**

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**We need to think right, and secondly, we need to ...**

## **2. Pray right.**

**Verses 6 and 7 are two of my favorite Bible verses. The New Living Translation sums them up nicely with, “Don’t worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything!”**

**We’re all good at worrying, but sometimes we feel ill-prepared to pray. Yet, if you know how to worry, you know how to pray. Worrying is talking to yourself about things outside your control. Praying is talking to God about things outside your control.**

**Oswald Chambers wrote, “All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God.” When the anxiety level starts rising, talk to God about it.**

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**You come to God humbly, submitting your will to his.**

**You don’t approach God like some heavenly slot machine where you’re hoping to hit the jackpot.**

**You approach God with awe or respect. And you ask him for what you need—that’s petition or supplication: the process of shifting your burden from you to God. It’s okay to ask.**

**Parents want their children to humbly ask, and the Heavenly Father wants his children to come to him with their needs.**

**Notice it says to ask, “with thanksgiving.” There’s nothing worse than a spoiled child who always says, “Gimme, gimme, gimme!” We need to be grateful for what we already have, and we also need to be grateful for however God may choose to respond. Gratefulness in advance is another sign of faith. We can be grateful that God cares for us. Whether God says, “Yes,” “no,” or “wait,” God is still a good God.**

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**When you find yourself growing anxious, give it to God, and don’t take it back!**

**Follow the advice of 1 Peter 5:7, which says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” Trust that God cares for you and is at work in your situation. And begin to act on faith that God will direct your steps forward.**

Someone once said, “If your knees are shaking, kneel on them.” Instead of worrying, why not try praying? Maybe God will take your problem away. But even if He doesn’t, you will gain perspective. You will see God for who he is and your problem for what it is.

The “START” Bible says, “If you have a big God, then you have a relatively small problem. But if you have a big problem, then maybe you have a small god.” [NKJV, Start: The Bible for New Believers, Thomas Nelson, 1227.] The giant Goliath looked at the shepherd boy David and saw a small problem. But David looked at Goliath and saw a large God ... along with a target too big to miss!

Look what God promises when we give our anxiety to him: Verse 7 says the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The Greek here is a military image: a God who is on guard duty over our hearts and minds. The Bible says God never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4), unlike some other sentries throughout history. God will bring his peace over our entire being—hearts and minds—in a way beyond our understanding!

Think right and pray right, and then lastly,

### 3. Live right!

This is the Nike principle: “Just do it!” Put your thoughts and your prayers into action. Verse 5 describes how we should live with “gentleness.” Other Bible versions describe it as gracious, reasonable, moderate, considerate, content, generous, lenient, patient, forgiving, calm. The idea is to live with graciousness out of a humble spirit. You don’t always have to get your way. You are willing to yield your rights to another.

Now why would anyone want to yield their rights to another? The rest of verse 5 tells us: because the Lord is near. The Christian believer has the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, within them 24/7. Wherever you go, Jesus goes with you. You are never alone; the Lord is nearby.

But there is also an end times application here: Jesus is coming soon! His return draws nearer every day. All of the New Testament urges us to be ready, for he may come at any moment. So, live the way he wants you to live now.

**In verse 9, Paul urges the good folks of First Church, Philippi to follow his example: not only what he says but also what he does.**

**I learned early on that my kids will follow my actions a lot faster than they will my words. Despite what I say, it is what I do that counts. Words are cheap. Actions matter. So, put it into practice! Think right. Pray right. And live right. And Paul promises us, “The God of peace will be with you.” Joe Quatrone writes, “With the peace of God to guard us and the God of peace to guide us—why worry?”**

## Advancing Through Anxiety Series

September 10, 2025

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