

Choosing Peace over Worry
"Replacing Worry with Prayer"
Philippians 4:1-9

Introduction:

1. Have you ever heard the expression, "She is a worry wart?" Does the word "wart" conjure up positive images in your mind? Worry is not a positive thing, it is like a wart.
2. Paul deals with the subject of worry in the text before us. Verse 6 says, *"Be careful for nothing."*
 - The word "careful" means "anxious, full of anxiety." So, Paul is saying "Don't be worried, afraid, or anxious."
 - The word "anxious" means "to be distracted, to have a divided mind."
 - The dictionary defines "worry" as "mental distress or agitation resulting from concern usually for something impending or anticipated."
3. Worry will so consume your thought life that you cannot stay focused on anything because you are being distracted by what you are worried about.
4. Worry adversely affects our lives. Worry can damage our health, consume our thoughts, disrupt our productivity, negatively affect the way we treat people, and weaken our faith.
 - The word "worry comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to choke, to strangle." This is exactly what worry will do to you in your life.
5. But what is the alternative to worry? Look again at verse six, but let's read on this time to verse seven. The alternative is **peace**.
6. Here in Philippians 4, God is going to show us very clearly how we can choose peace over worry. Notice I use the word "**choose**." Peace in our lives doesn't just happen.
7. Peace doesn't seek **us** out. We must **seek** peace and **choose** peace as we implement into our lives the Bible principles that we will be discovering in this passage.
8. How can we choose peace over worry?

First, by becoming a peacemaker. vs. 1-3

Second, by daily rejoicing in the Lord. vs. 4

Third, by replacing your worry with prayer. vs. 6-7

1. If we could really grasp this principle, it would revolutionize our lives. In verse 6, Paul gives a negative command and then a positive command.
 - "Be careful for nothing" - do not worry or be anxious about anything.
 - But then he desires for them to replace the negative action of worry with something positive - prayer!
2. I can't think of anything more **destructive** than worry, but on the other hand, I can't think of anything more **constructive** than prayer. Here is the principle: when you are tempted to worry, pray instead.
3. Paul then uses four different words or phrases to emphasize his point and to encourage these believers to replace their worry with prayer.

"Prayer" - this word carries the idea of coming before God, adoring Him, and worshipping Him. When we do this, we see the greatness and majesty of God and our worries don't seem so big anymore.

"Supplication" - this carries the idea of earnestly, from our hearts, sharing our needs and problems with God. **Illustration:** Jesus in the Garden

"Thanksgiving" - this is so crucial. Our Father enjoys hearing His children say "thank you", but O how many times we forget this. We are quick to ask things of God, but slow to appreciate. When we are tempted to worry about something, why don't we find five things that we can praise and thank God for? **Ephesians 5:20;**

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Let your requests..." - after you have the first three, now simply let God know what you would like for him to do. Make it known to Him what your requests are - not our demands, but our requests.

4. Here is the issue in a nutshell - God really does want to hear from us. He wants to hear about our worries, problems, and concerns. He wants us to petition Him for His help, and His provision.
5. You may ask, "How many of my problems does He want to hear about, because I have a lot of them!" Let's go back to verse 6. It says, "...*in everything*..."
 - There is no problem too big or too small that you cannot take to God in prayer.
6. Sometimes we are prone to pray about the "big things," the major problems of life, but we feel like we can handle the "little things." So we worry and fret and try to work these things out ourselves.
 - The problem is that many times (because we didn't take it to God), the little things grow into major problems.
 - God desires for us to take everything to Him in prayer. **1 Peter 5:7**
7. When we do this, notice the promise of verse 7. The peace of God guards our hearts and minds. These are the two areas that create worry.
 - The heart is the source of wrong feelings and destructive emotions.
 - The mind is the source of wrong thoughts and destructive thinking.
8. But when we take everything to God in prayer, the peace of God **keeps** our hearts and minds.
 - The word "keep" is a military term. It means "to mount guard as a sentinel, to hem in, to protect."
 - Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, guarded night and day. Paul is saying that in like manner, when we pray, instead of worrying, the peace of God stands guard over these two areas that create worry - the heart and the mind.
9. When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we have peace **with** God. **Romans 5:1**
10. But now this takes us a step further. Here we have not just peace **with** God, but the peace **of** God.
 - This doesn't mean the absence of trials and problems, but it does mean a quiet confidence within, regardless of the circumstances, people or things. The storms of life can be raging around us, but deep inside it is like the eye of a hurricane - total peace.

11. As the Bible says, it is a peace that passes all understanding. The world can't figure it out, but it is a reality for the child of God that chooses to replace his or her worry with prayer.