

FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY
For Spiritual Peace and Fruitfulness
Published January 2017.

In seeking to find a way to introduce this matter of anxiety the Lord gave me a picture. I saw a large contingent of people and in the distance there was a large storm brewing. Wild wind, fire and confusion were moving toward the people. A voice said, “These people will not be able to face this storm because there is a plague on them. They are weakened by this plague and many will not be able to withstand the storm.” I said, “Lord what is this plague that can weaken your people so that they will not be able to withstand the coming storms?”

He said, “The plague is anxiety, and when my people are plagued with anxiety it has a very devastating and weakening effect on them. To prepare my people for what lays ahead the plague of anxiety must be eradicated from their lives.”

To eradicate the plague of anxiety then is the goal of the following message. However, following is not put forward as an in depth clinical analysis or treatment for serious anxiety disorders. Such conditions may require professional help. The intention here is to address the plague of anxiety which we all face in our complex present day environments. For significant benefit it may require a number of readings and time taken in order to replace old habits and practice developing new habits.

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Freedom From Anxiety

For Spiritual Peace and Fruitfulness

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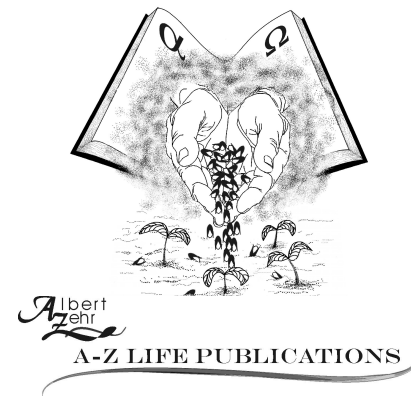
Let's not let the “plague” of anxiety:

- Disturb our peace and limit our fruitfulness
- Rob our joy and generate fear and unbelief

Let's recover the release from anxiety by:

- A revelation of our loving Abba Father
- Discovering the peace that transcends understanding
- Knowing our place, our calling, and our authority

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32



DEALING WITH OFFENCE

Published January, 2001

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The following message was first shared at the Church of Zion in September, 2000, and later it was shared in various places. Many listeners suggested that it was a timely word and should be put in print.

With this encouragement I prepared a first draft and offered it to some friends and proof readers. The response was positive. However, I did have to exercise not to be offended when the proof readers sent it back looking like it had measles -thanks, Peg Byars and Arlene Kubin. All readers will benefit from your careful corrections.

By 2009 this booklet has showed up in many nations and has been translated into: Chinese, Spanish, German & Russian.

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I Need Thee Every Hour Annie S. Hawks, 1835-1918

Chorus: I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee
O bless me now my Savior
I come to Thee

I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord.
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.

I need Thee, every hour
Stay Thou nearby.
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.

I need Thee, every hour
In joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide.
Or life is vain.

FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY

“The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of faith is the end of anxiety.”

George Mueller

INTRODUCTION

In seeking to find a way to introduce this matter of anxiety, the Lord gave me a picture. I saw a large contingent of people and, in the distance, there was a large storm brewing. Wild wind, fire and confusion were moving toward the people. A voice said, “These people will not be able to face this storm because there is a plague on them. They are weakened by this plague and many will not be able to withstand the storm.” I said, “Lord, what is this plague that can weaken Your people to not be able to withstand the coming storms?”

And He said, “The plague is anxiety, and when My people are plagued with anxiety it has a very devastating and weakening effect on them. To prepare My people for what lays ahead, the plague of anxiety must be eradicated from their lives.”

To eradicate this plague of is the goal of the following message.

THE NATURE OF ANXIETY

Worry and Anxiety

Worry and anxiety are basically the same. We will use these words interchangeably. In fact, both words come from the same Greek root word, (*merimnao*). In Matthew 6:25, we see “*Therefore I tell you do not worry....*” Here the same Greek word is used as in Philippians 4:6 “*Do not be anxious...*” This word can also be translated as “being care full,” as in being stressed or overburdened. See Luke 10:41, where Jesus told Martha that she was careful, as in being worried and upset. Generally, anxiety gets itself caught in the stress of worrying about “what if,” “what about,” or “why.” What if such and such does or doesn’t happen? In this sense, we should trust and be “care less.”

At its core, anxiety is primarily a result of a lack of faith and trust in the protection and providence of our Heavenly Father and in the validity of His promises. While we may sing and declare that our Father is a good, good God, meanwhile in our daily living we tend to deny this by our doubts and worry. Thus, anxiety can also be referred to as unbelief. Unbelief is simply a lack of trust, or of not being able (or willing) to believe.

We could also say that anxiety causes a rupture in our faith reservoir.

After a great time of worship or a powerful message, one's faith level may be high, but if anxiety is given place, it punctures a hole in our faith reservoir and faith leakage begins to occur, and more doubt and anxiety replaces that faith.

Harvard Medical School defines anxiety as, "a reaction to stress that has both psychological and physical features." The feeling of anxiety is thought to arise in the **amygdala**, a brain region that governs many intense emotional responses. As neurotransmitters carry the impulse to the sympathetic nervous system, heart and breathing rates increase, muscles tense, and blood flow is diverted from the abdominal organs to the brain. In the short term, anxiety prepares us to confront a crisis by putting the body on alert. But, when prolonged or continuous, physical effects can be counterproductive, causing light-headedness, nausea, diarrhea, and frequent urination. And, when it persists, anxiety can take a toll on our mental and physical health.

The "Fruit" of Anxiety

The fruit of anxiety is primarily negative. Generally, it eventually turns out that the anxiety didn't change anything and was totally unnecessary. Sometimes it is activated by regrets. Here again it bears no positive fruit. Bad choices and bad experiences are to be learned from and then surrendered to the cleansing blood of Jesus. When we step out of anxiety, negative experiences can be turned into stepping stones. Much learning can be accumulated from mistakes.

Many times, anxiety is also a result of placing demanding expectations on ourselves or on others. The person is in a state of anxious stress looking for a certain action. When these expectations are not met, it generates frustration and damaged relationships. See Romans 14:1, "*Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.*"

Since anxiety seems to be so common, it is often considered as just a normal part of human life. So, what is the big deal? Don't we all have our share of stress and anxiety? We all do face stressful situations, but this does not mean that anxiety qualifies as a normal experience in a balanced healthy Christian life. Actually, as indicated above, anxiety is a serious plague and has devastating consequences. As we will see, the Lord wants us to overcome anxiety and has provided His grace to empower us to overcome this plague. We declare that by His grace we can and will walk in **Freedom from Anxiety**.

THE CONSEQUENCES

To realize the seriousness of anxiety in a believer's life, we need to

in our body and we may need to review our habits, perhaps change our lifestyle. For example, issues like diabetes, thyroid, adrenal/immune/hormonal issues, sleep deprivation, may be generating anxiety and need to be addressed.

Anxiety is also a part of processing developmental phases of life during transition e.g. grief, moving, divorce, loss of job, culture shock and trauma. Walking through these phases with people who care, as well as with God will assist in overcoming this anxiety. These can motivate learning our true identity and help us mature in Christ if they are faced and processed in a healthy way.

In any of these situations, anxiety is a normal function, which will not be resolved if ignored. It is part of our built in God given 'flight or fight' response that we need to pay attention to. "Something is wrong! Will you do something different?"

In these cases the related anxiety may provide a temporary function. However, as these issues are addressed, the anxiety should diminish. Then, as the principles put forward in the present writing are applied, freedom from anxiety should be assured.

A FINAL WORD

By the nature of the brevity of this writing, the matter of anxiety is being addressed in a very concentrated form. For maximum benefit, it may need to be re-read. Many behavior patterns are quite deeply ingrained. To change these habits requires consistent and repeated effort.

The almost hidden message in Philippians 4:5; "the Lord is near," has been my most effective remedy to be quickly released from anxiety. Most often, this is actuated by the chorus of a song I learned many years ago. The words which I repeat over and over are very simple. Somehow, it lifts me into a state of dependency which draws His presence into my heart and calms all anxiety. I highly recommend it. Find the music on Google.

appearance. He allowed anxiety to cause him to respond to the situation and take premature action. This action caused the loss of his anointing and position. (See 1 Samuel 13)

CARING FOR OUR BODY: GOD'S TEMPLE

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” 1 Corinthians 6:19

Adequate Nutrition

We are made up of body, soul and spirit and the health of each is interconnected and affects the other parts. When our body is over-fed yet suffering from malnutrition, our psychological capacity is compromised. The present sad state of health is reflected by the myriad of diet, supplements and weight loss programs. It has been proven that in many cases a radical change of diet alone can perform wonders in revitalizing a person's vitality, sense of well being, and capacity to face situations which would otherwise be overwhelming. The January 2017 CHARISMA Magazine features the story of Dr. Michael Brown who brought obesity and failing health to vibrant health and abounding energy simply by a change of diet. Just cutting out drinking pop and consuming sugar laden foods will produce significant weight loss and dramatic health improvement.

A time of fasting can also do wonders to rid the body of toxicity and help to clear the mind and heart of confusion, frustration and anxiety.

Adequate Rest

Another area which is easily overlooked yet very important for a healthy body and anxiety free life is allowing adequate time to rest, relax and sleep. Sleep time is when our body and mind are able to be renewed.

Sleep deprivation can lower the body's natural resistance, both physical and psychological.

Anxiety as a Safety Measure

There are times when anxiety may be a safety measure intending to deliver a message. In these cases, rather than attempting to ignore or suppress the anxiety, we need to interpret the message and take appropriate action.

At times anxiety may be like the “check engine” light, telling us something needs attention. It may be that we need to review our overloaded schedule. At such times it may not be effective just to make attempts to overcome the resulting anxiety. We may need to learn to say no. In other cases we may need to break a habit of always being late, by starting earlier. Anxiety may also be indicating that something is wrong physiologically

look at some of its devastating consequences. Becoming aware of the consequences of anxiety should motivate us to break free of this impoverishing plague.

Unfruitfulness

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells the parable of the farmer who scattered seed. In verse 22, He explains that, “*The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries/anxieties of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it making it **unfruitful**.*”

In Mark 4:19, the same interpretation is given to the same parable, and here the conclusion is that the worries/anxieties cause **unfruitfulness**.

Immaturity

In the Luke 8:14 account, we read, “*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they **do not mature**.*”

We see that no doubt the lack of maturity among many believers stems from allowing anxiety to choke out the growth of the Word in their hearts.

Limiting the Miraculous

It is overwhelming to read of the limitless miracles that Jesus performed. But, it is shocking to realize that He was limited by unbelief, which as we saw earlier is a form of anxiety. Matthew 13:58, “*And He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*” Here we see that a **lack of power for seeing miracles** may be a consequence of anxiety/unbelief.

Inability to Enter into God's Fullness

In Hebrews 4:6, we see that they (the Children of Israel) were not able to enter into the good land because of their unbelief. The good land for the Old Testament believers was simply a type of the fullness of fellowship which is now available to New Testament believers. In the same way that unbelief kept them from entering into the land, so unbelief/anxiety **keeps us from entering into God's fullness** today.

Unprepared for Difficult Times

Luke 21:34: “*Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close in on you unexpected like a trap.*”

Here we see that anxieties can dull our senses and cause us to be unprepared when days of despair or trials come upon us.

Accelerates Health Deterioration

Besides the spiritual consequences of anxiety, it is well known that anxiety has serious consequences on physical health.

According to Harvard Medical School, anxiety has now been implicated in several chronic physical illnesses, including heart disease, chronic respiratory disorders, and gastrointestinal conditions. When people with these disorders have untreated anxiety, the disease itself is more difficult to treat, their physical symptoms often become worse, and in some cases they die sooner.

Can Activate/Create Negative Issues

“What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.” Job 3:25

It is a fact that what we dwell on, or meditate on, begins to affect our being and even our environment. Anxiety can actually bring on and cause that which is feared to grow and even come to pass. Anxious expectation is allowing a form of pregnancy which will eventually give birth. Later we will see that just as anxious negative thoughts, produce negative consequences, so positive thoughts build faith and activate positive results.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

New Testament Examples

In the case where Jesus stilled the storm, the disciples were obviously overtaken by anxiety. See Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41. While circumstances might appear to have justified their anxiety, the real issue was that they did not recognize who the person in the boat with them was. As believers, our anxiety is a result of our inability to recognize **Who is with us and in us!**

When Jesus was a guest at the home of Mary and Martha, we see that Martha became anxious about needing to serve Him. Jesus' response was, *“Martha, Martha you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed....”* Luke 10:41. This situation tells us that knowing and being with the Lord is far more important than our anxious doing.

In the King James version, it says, *“thou art careful and troubled about many things...”* The word translated “careful” is the same word as the word “anxiety.” In this case we might see careful as “full of cares” as opposed to being “free of care,” or carefree.

The Apostle Peter no doubt had to deal with anxiety, but eventually he came to realize that we could, *“Cast all your anxiety/care on Him because He cares for you.”* 1Peter 5:7

PUTTING OFF THE OLD AND PUTTING ON THE NEW

We all have a limited capacity. If our life is filled with clutter and our heart saturated with evil and negativity there is little room for positive input. Sometimes in order to have capacity for the new we need to make room by putting off the old.

Ephesians 4:22-25 *“You were taught regarding your former way of life, to **put off**, your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on** the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must **put off** falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”*

Colossians 3:2,5,8 *“Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things...” “**Put to death** therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...” “**But now you must rid yourself** of all such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips.”*

The point we want to see here is that our being cannot be a host to all the things of the, “old nature” and expect to be free of anxiety which is a natural characteristic of the old nature. To be free of anxiety we must **put off** these characteristics, so that we will have the capacity to **put on** the qualities of the new nature which are immune to anxiety. To put off requires a recognition and an honest acknowledgement of the old, a surrendering to the Lord, and allowing Him to purge us of it.

LEARNING TO WAIT

One of the common factors that activate anxiety is the expectations of a predetermined time frame. We may say that we respect God's timing, but if it does not match our schedule we easily become anxious or begin to initiate things. History and experience should tell us that this can be counter productive. Whether in childbirth or in seeing dreams fulfilled, His timing is best.

Historic Examples

Although Abraham had God's promise, he could not wait for God's timing and along with Sarah's advice he took initiative and produced Ishmael. The implications of this presumption have affected all of history. (See Genesis 16)

Aaron lost patience and bowed to the pressure of the people. Becoming anxious concerning Moses delay he proceeded to take action to accommodate the people by building the golden calf with devastating consequences. (See Exodus 32)

Saul had been instructed to wait until the prophet Samuel made his

great loss. I was strongly advised to get legal help. One night as I was meditating on this situation, I felt the Lord was saying, “I am an excellent lawyer and I work nights, if you wish I can take on your case and you can rest.”

I accepted His offer, and although there seemed to be a great loss at the moment, it turned out for a huge benefit in the form of an income for fifteen years of retirement.

Meditating on fears, apprehensions and offences, gives them ground to exaggerate themselves, activate much fear and anxiety and become our perception of reality.

Neutral Meditation

This might be defined as, “getting into” an activity or endeavor. It may be politics, sports or field of study or even a hobby. This could be positive as in educating oneself. It can consume much thought and energy with no significant returns. Besides being a distraction it may occupy much time which could be redeemed through positive mediation.

Positive Meditation

Herein lays the good news. If we train ourselves to engage in positive meditation we can arise out of anxiety and into peace and contentment. The first Bible mention of meditation is found in Joshua 1:8 *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”* We see that this sets a standard declaring that meditation assures success and prosperity which is a powerful antidote to anxiety.

The most frequent reference to meditation is found in the book of Psalms. This was David’s secret for being, *“a man after God’s heart.”*

From Psalm 1:2 we see that David’s secret was to: *“meditate on the law of the Lord, day and night.”* This practice is reinforced many times especially in Psalm 119. (See v 15, 23, 48, 78, 148.)

Beyond simply meditating, David desired that his meditation would be *“pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”* Psalm 19:14

David also considered singing and praising as a form of meditation. Psalm 104:13-14 *“I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him as I rejoice in the Lord.”*

Besides meditating verbally, we may also visualize “the things above” and “the beauty of the Lord,” and the “healing of our bodies.”

Old Testament Example

When Gideon was about to wage battle against the Midianites, he asked all who were fearful/anxious to drop out of the army. (See Judges 7:3) He knew that their fear not only affected themselves, but the atmosphere and those who were near them.

The most terrifying character in the Old Testament was Goliath. The army of Israel allowed themselves to be defeated by fear and anxiety at the sight of Goliath. David, on the other hand, knew Who His God was, rose above anxiety, believed in the Lord Almighty, and overcame the giant. Even today, anxiety can allow the “giants” in our lives and cause us to live in fear and intimidation. Whereas, if we simply trust in our Lord, the Almighty, remember that, *“Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies.”* Psalm 60:12

Taking Untimely Action

Anxiety often interconnects with impatience, which can cause a person to be unable to wait for the appropriate time for action. Abraham was unable to wait to see God’s promise of a son to be fulfilled, and his premature action created many problems. Aaron became anxious when Moses was delayed on the mountain, yielded to the pressure of the people, and provided the golden calf. Saul also yielding to anxiety, rather than waiting for Samuel as he was instructed, and took steps that cost him his kingship. How often have we allowed the virus of impatience active the plague of anxiety and cause us to take untimely action?

GROUNDINGS FOR ANXIETY TO FLOURISH

Lack of Knowing and Trusting our Heavenly Father

Our capacity to withstand anxiety is very much dependant on our knowing and trusting God as our loving and Sovereign heavenly Father.

Let’s consider how our level of anxiety demonstrates how fully we trust our heavenly Father. Suppose a little boy is teased by other boys on his way to school, so his father says, “Don’t worry, Son, I will walk with you tomorrow.”

The little boy’s level of anxiety when Daddy is with him tells how much he trusts his father. If he believes that his Daddy is strong and able to deal with any threats, he will be at ease. If he is fearful, he does not trust his father.

It is so easy for us to sing about our “Good, good Father” and how we are “no longer a slave to fear,” but, our level of anxiety tells us whether these are simply idle words, or whether we have allowed this reality of Who He really is to rule in our hearts.

Recovery usually begins with a confession. So, a good starting point for all of us is to acknowledge that we have been carriers of the plague of anxiety, and repent for our lack of trusting our heavenly Father. After we confess our lack of trust, we ask for a new revelation of Who He really is! This requires more than a natural resolution, it requires a spiritual revelation.

I pray daily, “Lord, grant me a deeper revelation of who You are until I can rest in your sovereign love.” Until I can declare with confidence, even as a little child, “my daddy is God,” and believe that **nothing** can come to me outside of His knowledge and without passing through His loving hand, I will struggle with anxiety.

Personal Insecurity

Knowing who we are is the other side of knowing who our God is. The solid basis for security is to know how God sees us, rather than allowing our feelings and moods to be our foundation. A person who is insecure will always be subject to anxiety. An insecure person often feels misunderstood, under attack, not appreciated and needing to be on the defense. He needs to be right in order to be accepted. All of these qualities create an environment where anxiety gets a free pass.

A secure person realizes who they are in Christ: loved and accepted, whether being right or wrong. This person’s sense of value or worth is not dependant on what others say or think. They are able to be objective and learn from situations without feeling judged or falling into condemnation and anxiety.

There are many verses that we can declare to activate our faith in this area. (See: John 14:12; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 John 4:4.)

Weak in the Word

Spiritual energy is derived from Spiritual food. While worship may be considered as water and prayer as exercise, only the Word is food.

Today there is much emphasis on worship and in walking by the Spirit. These are good but without a solid foundation and continual “ingestion” of the Word our resistance to anxiety will be weak. For me, daily time in the Word is necessary to maintain immunity against anxiety.

I have six well worn Bibles, each representing a decade of my Christian walk. My first major study Bible is dated 1961. It contains markings on most pages. Several books, especially Psalms, Proverbs, Ephesians and Philippians are heavily underlined. The Next Bible, dated 1972, is heavily underlined in Genesis, Exodus, 1 and 2 Samuel, John and Revelation. As I review these Bibles and the notes, I can see my spiritual history. I believe

As we exercise our faith with prayerful thanksgiving, we open ourselves for the peace of God to invade our minds and bring peace to our hearts. Since anxiety begins in our minds we must focus on that peace which transcends the understanding of our minds. Then our hearts can also be at peace. This peace can often be obtained by taking time to, “pray in the spirit.”

Philippians 4:8 *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable –if anything is admirable –if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.”*

Here we find a practical daily formula for overcoming anxiety. Although not immediately obvious, the secret lies in the final phrase, **“think on these things.”** This leads us to consider the practice of what is commonly referred to as meditation. While this word may have negative connotations it is very much referred to (over 20 times) in the Bible. Because we have allowed the negative connotations to deter us we may be missing a powerful tool.

MEDITATION

Mediation Defined

It may be a surprise to know that everyone meditates. To meditate may be defined as musing, considering, contemplating, pondering, or to dwell on. Meditation implies more than a casual thought, but rather a steady focusing on, or we might say, “chewing on” a matter for some time and perhaps doing so frequently. While it may primarily be thought of as in the mind or in silence, it can also be even more effective when done with the voice as in muttering. **It is important to be aware that what we meditate on develops and becomes a part of our person and constitution. From this definition we might classify three dimensions of meditating.**

Negative Meditation

This type of mediation which most everyone practices is most common although it is not generally thought of as mediation. It is simply a matter of allowing our mind to consider and “chew on” a frustration or a troubling situation, or fretting over a potential problem. This is what Jesus was referring to in Luke 21:14 where He tells us not to worry about what to say before a trial, since the words will be given to us at the right time. What a gain if we could redeem those countless hours of negative meditation, many perhaps spent in the nighttime, often arranging and rearranging our arguments to vindicate or defend ourselves in an upcoming situation.

Years ago we were facing a major trial, with the potential of suffering

perhaps with a friend or counselor, deal with these roots and break the power that they hold in us. To deal more specifically with these areas is beyond the scope of this writing.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The most pertinent passage on anxiety is found in Philippians 4:4-8. Here we find practical ways that we can deal with and overcome anxiety. Each verse provides an important ingredient in the recipe for freedom from anxiety.

Philippians 4:4 *“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!”*

Rejoicing has a powerful effect on our perspective. The letter to the Philippians was written by Paul while he was in prison. He had many excuses to be anxious yet the word rejoice, appears seven times in just four chapters. This was a key ingredient that empowered him to rise above anxiety. Rejoice implies a verbal confession of thanksgiving and joy. What we speak with our mouth directs our thoughts into a positive frame. Worship and praise is a form of rejoicing. One of King David’s secrets was that he practiced rejoicing, and often even by shouting. *“My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you I, whom you have redeemed.”* Psalms 71:23

Philippians 4:5 *“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”*

Gentleness is another key ingredient. This includes a gentle, forbearing and patient attitude toward everyone. Much stress and anxiety could be alleviated if we would exercise grace, forbearance and kindness to all. The second although the shortest phrase; **“The Lord is near,”** suggests a consciousness that the Lord is immediately present; both in the sense that He is watching, but also that He is protecting and providing the grace of His presence to carry us through any situation. This is perhaps the most powerful factor in dispelling anxiety. Even more, to remember that He is in us. 1 Corinthians 6:19.

Philippians 4:6 *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

Here is the verse that mentions anxiety directly. Although it presents prayer as the answer it qualifies the kind of prayer needed in this situation. Not a prayer, of worry and complaints, but a prayer of thanksgiving. Worry and complaint exaggerates and activates our anxiety. Thanksgiving lifts us above the realm of anxiety and connects us with appreciation and an assurance of God’s love and faithfulness. It allows us to, “leave our heavy burden at the cross and go free.”

Philippians 4:7 *“And the peace of God, which transcend all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

that my being consistent in “ingesting” the Word has preserved me from being plagued by anxiety. It requires more than being knowledgeable about the contents of the Word, it requires the daily nourishment of the Word.

I suspect that if we would take a survey we would find that those most afflicted by anxiety may not have a strong foundation in the Word, and spend little time in the Word daily.

As a nutritionist I have said, if I can watch how and what you eat I can tell you something about your health. Now I would say, show me your Bible, and I will be able to tell much about your Spiritual health and stamina.

FREEDOM PRINCIPLES

He Knows and He Cares

In the following section, we want to look at a number of references and allow the truth in them to penetrate our hearts. This will be an inoculation and an antidote to the germ of worry and help to rid us of the plague of anxiety.

Jesus talks about how our heavenly Father cares for the birds and the flowers. How much more does He care for us! He well knew that much of our anxiety will focus on the matters of being able to meet our basic necessities. First, He puts forward the obvious fact that worrying can not add even a single hour to our life. Matt. 6:27, *“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”*

With this recognition He admonishes us not to worry, or be anxious; with the assurance that our Father knows our need.

Verse 31 *“So do not worry saying, “What shall we eat? Or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows you need them.”*

Sometimes the Lord will take us through a dramatic situation to allow us to experience and **prove** His faithfulness. After some real life experiences we will be able to say, “How I’ve proved Him over and over.” Years ago, when we experienced a dramatic encounter with the Lord, we sensed that He wanted us to sell our house, let go of our position, and forfeit our income. We wrote Matthew 6:33, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.”* onto a large paper and declared it to be our motto for our remaining days.

We moved into the city to join a new Church fellowship. Suddenly, upon singing the line of an old hymn, *“Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold,”* we felt the Lord asked us to give all the remaining money we had to the church, even though we had four children and I had no job. This seemed radical and absurd, but we were determined to believe

our new motto.

When I offered all of our money to the elders, they were quite surprised. A wise elder responded, “The Lord sees your heart, and we will receive the money and now we give it back to you to provide for your family.”

Passing through this experience broke the power of the anxiety of not having enough, and established a new level of trust in His faithfulness and ability to provide. Sometimes we need to step out by faith and allow the Lord to **prove** Himself, so this becomes more than a theory but a proven reality.

Luke 12:32, *“Do not be afraid like flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”*

Here we have an amazing promise and assurance from our Father through the very words of Jesus Himself. In recent times there has been much emphasis that as His sheep we need to learn to hear His voice. Along with hearing His voice we as one of His sheep and He being the good Shepherd, we really have no reason to fear or being anxious.

Luke 12: 11, *“When you are brought before, do not worry how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what to say.”*

Much of our anxiety is related to what might or might not happen, and what we should do or say during an upcoming difficult situation. How often do we fret, rehearse and even lose sleep over what to say and how to address an upcoming crisis? The promise is clear, we can relax, He will be there with us and through the Holy Spirit will give us words and wisdom at that time. If we fully embrace and believe this promise, we will be spared from much anxiety. (See Luke 21: 14.)

Praying in the Spirit

As noted above, anxiety often gains ground when we are facing an uncertain situation where consequences may be significant. We struggle and become anxious over what to do or say. As I consider this I recall the words of one of our faithful spiritual fathers, Bob Birch, know as Pastor Bob. His word that still echoes in my heart was, “When you do not know what to do or say, pray in the spirit.”

There are no doubt, times when past experiences, human wisdom and insight are inadequate, but our heavenly Father knows. When we allow ourselves to by-pass our limited minds and engage our spirits, many times the Holy Spirit will download answers beyond our knowledge.

Learning to Detach

Much anxiety is also a result of unnecessarily involving ourselves with

matters that are beyond our “jurisdiction.” Sometimes we need to detach ourselves from being involved in situations and other people’s lives. The following word, although not very familiar, helped me greatly through the years.

Psalm 131:1-2 *“My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty, I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.”*

Generally I understand this to mean, that I don’t need to involve myself in what is not my business or within my jurisdiction. This can be applied in a number of ways. Within my church I have certain responsibilities, beyond that I can trust others without trying to involve myself.

When someone makes a crazy move in traffic I don’t need to get all worked up and stressed about it. So what if the neighbor cuts his lawn too short or the boy next door wears his hat backward. Here the word is, “Detach!” That is really not my issue!

There may be situations where I am called to get involved, but most of the time it is not my place to police others actions or words. The Message puts it, “I have not meddled where I have no business.”

I do not need to place behavioral expectations on others and then spend much energy to see that they perform up to my expectations. The word here is, “Detach and set others free and let them be!”

POSSIBLE ROOT ISSUES

Childhood Experiences

During our childhood there may be certain traumatic experiences that still factor into our way of perceiving present situations. Suppose, a child is somehow separated from parents or acquaintances; feels abandoned, and is overcome by fear. If this experience and perhaps other similar experiences are not adequately processed, this fear of abandonment may still be rooted in the person as an adult. This will give ground for anxiety to be activated whenever there is uncertainty in this area.

Perhaps a child was severely shamed or reprimanded for being late. Even as an adult this person may become anxious whenever the possibility of not being on time arises.

Some children raised under demanding expectations may have developed into being a perfectionist. This may cause in them a tendency to place demands and expectations on themselves, as well as on others. When these expectations are not met, tension and anxiety develops.

In order to find relief if we find ourselves exhibiting a pattern of anxiety in these areas, we may need to deal with the root issues. Take some time,