

PHILIPPIANS: REPLACING SELFISH AMBITION WITH GODLY ACHIEVEMENT

Part XII: Gaining Complete Peace Over All Anxiety

(Philippians 4:6-9)

I. Introduction

- A. As we have often noted in this lesson series, the Philippian believers lived in a culture marked by selfish ambition and strife, what tempted them to relate to one another in a sinfully selfish way, cf. Philippians 4:2.
- B. However, a culture marked by selfishness is one marked by intense competition, and intense competition in every phase of life eventually leads to varying experiences of defeat and harm, producing anxiety in life.
- C. Paul addressed this very issue of anxiety in Philippians 4:6-9, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Gaining Complete Peace Over All Anxiety, Philippians 4:6-9.

- A. In Philippians 4:6a, Paul told his readers, "Not at all, in no way" (*meden*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 520) "be anxious" (*merimnao*, Ibid., p. 506; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 690). In English, we reverse the word order, translating the phrase, "Do not be anxious about anything." (ESV)
- B. This command reveals that **any** anxiety is **sin**, that God wants His people to live in victory **above all** anxiety!
- C. Philippians 4:6b-9 explains **HOW** such complete victory over all anxiety is to be **achieved** (as follows):
 1. First, one gains **initial** victory over anxiety by giving his burden of anxiety to God in prayer, Phil. 4:6b-7:
 - a. The word rendered "but" (KJV, NIV, ESV) in Philippians 4:6b is the adversative particle *alla* (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 690) that indicates a contrast with what precedes. (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 37)
 - b. Thus, Paul indicated that instead of being in any way anxious, the believer should **rather** let his requests about what concerns him in **every** realm of **concern** be made unto God with thanksgiving for God's wise provisions in answer to the prayer, Philippians 4:6c. This action involves trusting God to be sovereign over the issue of concern and wise as to how to address it with the believer's best interests in mind.
 - c. When such action is taken, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will supernaturally "guard, protect, keep" (*phroureo*, Ibid., p. 875) one's heart and mind from anxiety in Christ Jesus, Philippians 4:7.
 2. Second, one gains **lasting** victory over anxiety by adjusting his thinking and actions to God's will, v. 8-9:
 - a. Due to human frailty, we believers can readily either fail to trust God's sovereignty or wisdom, choosing rather to focus on the issue of concern so that even after praying about the anxiety, we may take the burden of anxiety back from the Lord and burden ourselves by worrying about it all over again!
 - b. Accordingly, Paul directed an additional step occur, that one adjust his thought and action to align with the will of God to keep the issue of anxiety away from one's heart and mind, Philippians 4:8-9:
 - i. Once one has unburdened his heart in prayer to God about the matter that worries him, he needs to fill his mind with what edifies lest the emptied mind be tempted to return to be anxious once again.
 - ii. Accordingly, after prayer to God to commit the issue of anxiety to Him (Philippians 4:6-7), the believer needs to fill his mind with whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent or worthy of praise, and to think on these things, Philippians 4:8 ESV.
 - iii. As for one's actions, in place of remaining idle so that he can more easily be tempted to dwell on what would worry him, he is to "do, practice, busy himself with" (*prasso*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 705) what he had learned, received, heard and seen in Paul's ministry and life, Philippians 4:9a.
 - iv. When these preoccupations with one's thinking and acting are implemented, Paul claimed the God of peace would be with (*meta*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.), or "with the company of" (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 509-511) them, Philippians 4:9b.
 3. In summary, (a) by committing the anxiety to God in prayer, the **peace** of God would guard, protect and keep the believer's mind and heart free of anxiety (Phil. 4:5-6), but (b) by (i) filling his mind emptied of the issue of anxiety with God's edifying truths and by (ii) occupying himself with Biblical acts exemplified in Paul's life and ministry, the **God** of peace would be with the believer's spirit in edifying fellowship. Committing the anxiety to God in prayer results in God's protective peace, but occupying one's mind and actions with Biblical content and directives is rewarded with the fellowship of the God of peace Himself!

Lesson: God calls us to total victory over all anxiety by committing the concern to Him in prayer in faith and thanksgiving that His sovereignty and wisdom will address it, producing God's protective peace, but also occupying our thoughts and actions with His directives that His fellowship might be ours to give us total peace over anxiety.

Application: *May we follow the Philippians 4:6-9 directive for complete victory over all anxiety we face in this life.*