ANXIOUS *for*

NOTHING

FINDING C ALM *in a* CHAOTIC WORLD

By Max Lucado with Jenna Lucado Bishop

**Present Your Requests to God**

 Read Philippians 4:4-8 / specifically v 6 for this lesson NKJV

OPENING REFLECTION

In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6, emphasis added).

Really? In *every* situation pray with thanksgiving?

Even when that punk takes your parking spot? Even when there is no more creamer in the fridge, your toddler is screaming bloody murder, and all you want is a cup of coffee?

Even when she says, “I have cancer,” or he leaves after decades of marriage? Surely not! Surely the original Greek translation of this verse means “in *most* situations pray with thanksgiving.”

In her book *The Hiding Pla*c*e*, Corrie ten Boom tells a remarkable story about gratitude. During World War II, she and her sister Betsie lived in three different concentration camps. The entire ten Boom family had been arrested for providing a safe haven to Jews and Nazi rebels. It’s estimated they saved eight hundred lives before being caught and sent away.

Corrie describes how the barracks of the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany was infested with fleas. The sisters were forced to sleep on wooden platforms with straw on top, but the straw was dirty, smelly, and crawling with the skin- biting pests. Corrie writes:

I sat up quickly and bumped my head on the platform above. “Fleas!” I jumped down to the floor. “The place is crawling with fleas! I . . . I don’t know how I can cope with living in such a terrible place!”

“Corrie, I think God has already given us the answer,” my sister Betsie said. “What was that verse we read from the Bible this morning?”

I pulled out my Bible from the bag I wore on a string around my neck. In the dim light, I read from 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18: “ ‘Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.’ Oh, Betsie, that’s too hard in a place like this!”

“No, come on, Corrie— let’s try. What are we thankful for?” my sister asked.

“Well . . . if we must be in this awful place, I’m thankful that we’re together.” . . .

“That’s right!” Betsie’s eyes danced. “And thank you, God, for the fleas— ”

Corrie goes on to say that the flea infestation kept the guards out of their barracks, allowing Corrie and Betsie to read the Bible aloud twice a day for any woman who wanted to hear. More and more women found the light of Christ in the darkest of places because of fleas.

Yes, there is a reason to be grateful in every circumstance.

 Corrie Ten Boom famously asked the question, “Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” How would you interpret her quote? How would you personally answer it?

How does a grateful heart affect your attitude toward anxiety? Can you think of a time when choosing gratitude changed the way you viewed a difficult situation?

James 5:13-16

Do you believe these verses are they true in your life? Do you pray with assurance that God hears you? Do you believe that your prayers are powerful and effective? Do you remember the phrase that we learned earlier in this study? The Lord is Near!

What does this passage and Max tell us is the primary fight against anxiety?

The words prayer, supplication and request. Many people think that they mean the same thing, asking. These words are similar but with small distinctions. Prayer is a devotion to God. Supplication is humility toward God. A request is a simple petition to God.

In Matthew 14:22-36 is the story Max used in the video, as long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he did the impossible… but as soon as he looked at the waves, he began to sink. When we shift our eyes off of Christ and onto our anxieties, we, like Peter, begin to drown in worry or despair.

Was Peter’s prayer to Jesus eloquent in verse 30?

*The power of prayer is not in chanting the right formula or quoting some secret code but in the heart of the one praying. God is not manipulated or impressed by formulas or eloquence, but he is moved by sincere requests. As his children, we honor him when we tell him exactly what we need.*

Are we afraid to be specific with our prayers? Are we afraid if we are too specific then if God doesn’t answer right away or the way we want Him to then it reflects negatively on us and on God? Better to be safe with a broad general prayer!

Max gives 3 reasons why it’s important to be specific with our requests to God: (1) a specific prayer is a serious prayer, (2) a specific prayer opens the door to seeing God at work, and (3) specific prayers create a lighter load.

Besides these 3 words in verse 6 Paul uses 2 other words **with thanksgiving** Paul calls us to pray with gratitude that creates a mindful awareness of the benefits God has provided to us in life.

Christ-based contentment is the key to finding joy. Since no one can take our Christ away, no one can take away our joy!

What we have in Christ is greater than anything we don’t have in life.

Why wasn’t Jesus in the boat with the disciples?

What was Jesus doing while the disciples were gone? (Verse 23)

What does this verse teach about the importance of prayer?

According to the parable in Luke 18:9-14 what kind of prayer is heart-honoring to God?

What is the promise of prayer in each of these passages? Matthew 7:7-8, John 14:13-14,; and Psalm 91:14-16.

Paul continually tells us to pray :with thanksgiving” throughout his New Testament letters, he lists blessing after blessing God has lavished upon us, giving us reasons to always be thankful. 1 Corinthians 15:51-56, Ephesians 2:1-7; and 1 John 3:1-2 according to these passages why can we be thankful in any circumstance?

Philippians 4:11-13 How does Paul say he is able to find contentment in all things (verse 13)?

What area or circumstance in your life do you find yourself complaining about most?

How can you apply Philippians 4:13 to your life so that you, like Paul, can find a reason to be grateful in every circumstance?

As we close our lesson today sing this song if you know it, if you do not know it go to youtube and search for it and listen to it as it plays.

**Count your Blessings! This is the song Max referenced in the Video.**

 **When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.**

**Refrain:
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.**

**Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. (Refrain)**

**When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high. (Refrain)**

**So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. (Refrain)**