ANXIOUS *for*

NOTHING

FINDING CALM *in a* CHAOTIC WORLD

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**Meditate on These Things**

 Read Philippians 4:4-9

OPENING REFLECTION

**"The challenges are great. But our God is greater."**

Friends. We find ourselves in a sober moment. These are uncertain times around the world and fears are rising. People who have never felt anxious before are suddenly weighed down with worry and are not sure what to do next.

Do you need encouragement right about now? Are you feeling anxious and uncertain? Do you find yourself in a season of isolation as events cancel, schools shift online, and churches close their doors to large gatherings?

When I need to stay calm, I turn to this Scripture: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:4-9, NIV).

**Less Fret, More Faith.**

Prayer, Not Despair

*Peace happens when people pray.*

Confront the Chaos

1. Think through your attitude toward prayer. Maybe you have been a Christian for a very long time and prayer has become trite. Maybe you are a new Christian and you are overwhelmed by this awe-inspiring interaction.

Are you jaded, confused, or apathetic, or are you excited about prayer?

Try to describe your prayer life in one phrase.

1. Read the parable of contrast in Luke 18:1-8

Note the differences between you and the widow in one column and the differences between God and the judge in another column.

What do you think it says about the nature of prayer that Jesus knew we would need a story that inspires us to pray consistently and never quit?

What is the one characteristic or posture that dominates this parable? What attribute of the praying life is most emphasized?

1. The parable ends with the question “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

What does this imply?

How would you answer this question?

1. “God doesn’t delay. He never places you on hold or tells you to call again later. God loves the sound of your voice. Always. He doesn’t hide when you call. He hears your prayers.”

Is it hard for you to believe that God wants to hear your prayers? Why or why not?

Is there an experience or situation that has deeply influenced this opinion? Explain.

If you knew for certain that God was listening to your prayers, how would your prayer life change?

1. Read the end of Luke 18, verses 35-43. As is characteristic of Jesus’ healings, he says to the blind man, “Your faith has made you well.”

How is the blind man’s faith evident in this interaction? Look carefully at the words used in this passage.

Notice also the crowd in the story. What is their reaction before the healing? What is their reaction after the healing?

Have you ever felt alone in your belief in the power of prayer?

Does popular opinion sway your belief in the power of prayer?

What might this story say about the effect your prayer life can have on those around you?

Choose Calm

1. Praying a specific prayer is “a serious prayer” and “an opportunity for us to see God at work,” and it “creates a lighter load.”

Consider your anxieties. Do you bring them, specifically, to God in prayer?

If yes how? If no, how might your do this?

1. Prayer takes discipline and dedication. It takes effort to make the time, and it takes belief to be consistent. If we don’t believe that God is hearing us or that he cares, our determination to pray will quickly fade.

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that Hew may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (I Peter 5:6-7).

According to these verses, why should you give your anxieties to God?

Is this a good enough reason to put the effort into prayer?

Notice, this verse does not ask you to forget or set aside your anxieties. It acknowledges that your anxieties are real. Instead of pushing them aside, you are putting them literally on God. He tells you to transfer the burden from yourself to him. How might this imagery guide the way you pray?

Determine a time each day when you will choose to list your anxieties. Physically fold up the list and place it somewhere (in a basket, drawer, etc.). When you start to feel anxious, remember that you have placed your burdens on God for the day.

1. In your own Bible reading, find three of God’s promises that speak to you. Hold God to his word, and ask him to do that which he has already said he would do in your life.

Meditation

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light” (Matt. 11:28-30 NLT).

Scripture

Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? **8**I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18%3A7%2CLuke+18%3A7-8&version=NIV;MSG;NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-25664a)] returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?” Luke 18:7-8 NLT

**6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Phil 4:6)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;

Isaiah 43:26

You said you would walk me through the waters.

Isaiah 43:2, Max’s paraphrase

Yu said you would lead me through the valley.

Psalm 23:4 Max’s paraphrase

You said that you would never leave or forsake me.

Hebrews 13:5, Max’s paraphrase

Prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters.

Ephesians 6:18 the message.