

March 2009 Week 3 TEACHING

Guiding You to the Top

Living at a time when it seems as though everyone is scurrying about in a state of panic, if you happen to be one of those people who likes to remain on the cool, calm, and collected side, you may feel a little out of place. Well, the Word of God tells us in Philippians 4:6 NLT, "*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*" So if you have managed to hold on to your peace with all the pandemonium out there, be thankful!

For those of you who have lost your jobs, or you are about to; for those who are struggling to make ends meet, and those of us who are just plain tired of all the stuff that is going on in the world today, we need to take a cue from Philippians 4:6 and tie up a few loose ends. The first of which is--"*Don't worry about anything*".

That's a tough one isn't it. But you have to ask yourself why you would engage a process that yields absolutely no benefit whatsoever. As a matter of fact, worrying makes a situation worst; and that's why God told us not to do it. Worrying is a choice, one that absorbs a great deal of mental and emotional energy. It steals the space in our minds that should be occupied by faith and thankfulness. We rob God every time we focus our minds to that degree on anything other than His goodness.

Robbing God is a pretty strong accusation, I know. But it's the truth. John 10:10 KJV says "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly.*" Jesus Christ came to set us free from worrying, so that we could have a life that is the exact opposite of one that is enslaved by fear. Worry at its very fundamental level, is plain ol' fear. It isn't the joy of God's love that keeps the devil busy, it's our fear that 1) God won't fix it and 2) we don't deserve to have it fixed.

No matter how you look at it, both of these two scenarios give the devil the opening he needs to steal what God has for us. God doesn't cause the thief to steal our joy, we offer it freely by spending so much time doubting God and His love.

Make a shift in your attitude. It make take some doing and some time, but you can change your circumstances dramatically by shifting to an attitude of faith. You begin this process by doing the second thing, which is to "*pray about everything*".

Now listen, when the Lord says pray about everything, He has an expectation that you have done the prep work to get your head and heart in gear. Hebrews 11:6 NLT says "*So,*

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you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." We cannot take a worrying heart before God and expect Him to draw faith from it. God hears us when we pray, no matter what it is that we are praying about, but we want Him to do more than just hear us, we want Him to move on our behalf. That's why He gave us this tremendous gift called "*faith*", so that we could have every confidence that He is who He says He is, and He will do what He says He will do.

He will reward those who sincerely seek Him, as it says in Hebrews 11:6 NLT. To sincerely seek Him is to make some room in yourself to accommodate who He is. You have the great privilege to go before the throne of God, the creator of the universe, and have an audience with Him. It is a gob smacking moment of awe every time you open your mouth in His direction....to know that you are speaking to God Almighty. He is due every ounce of honor we can muster. So when we step up to the plate to have a word with Him, we had better recognize.

When we have this kind of reverence and respect, we are poised to pray about anything and everything, because we know that it is NOT in vain. We come to God recognizing the greatness of who He is and what He is able and willing to do to bless us.

The third thing we need to do is to be specific, "*Tell God what you need.*" And if you are going to tell Him what you need, spend the time it takes to figure out exactly what that is. It is never about that husband, that child, that friend, that co-worker, or that job. It is always about our relationship with God.

Romans 8:28 NLT says "*And we know that God causes everything to work together* for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*"

Know this, you have been called for a divine purpose, and no matter what the source of your pain is this very moment, God has already factored it into the victory that will most assuredly be yours. You will be triumphant. You will be successful, and you will rise to a new place in Christ that will be nothing short of glorious.

God wants you to lean on His strength, because it is a strength that never fails. Ephesians 6:10 KJV tells us to be strong in the power of His might. And if you don't believe in the power of His might, then that is the "*need*" you ought to be praying about. Change doesn't occur from the outside in, but from the inside out. When you purpose your mind and heart to become a person whose faith is strong, the indwelling Holy Spirit will partner with your efforts. It will begin to help you move out the stuff that is weighing you down, so that you can move lighter, and with more of God's love in your heart.

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The situation that caused us to worry is not the problem. The problem is that when the devil threw the dart our way, we didn't have sufficient armor. We didn't have enough in our spiritual reserves to stand impenetrable amidst the attack. Replenishing our spiritual reserve must be the priority. Our relationship with God must come first.

The fourth and final thing we must do is "*thank him for all he has done.*" When we are in the midst of heartache and struggle, cultivating a spirit of thankfulness may not be the easiest thing to do if you haven't made a shift. That's why the shift is absolutely necessary. Your mind is the greatest instrument that can be employed to foster your total well-being. If you will not discipline it to help yourself, then you will severely limit what anyone else can do to help you.

Put your thoughts in check. Every time you want to obsess about your situation, think on the sweetness of our blessed savior. Ask Jesus Christ to comfort you. Call on his name as many times as you need to; there's power in that name. Allow his love to fill your heart, and know that as you call upon him, he will help to clear your mind. He will give you peace and help you figure out your next move.

You may not feel victorious right now. You may not feel like a winner, but that's okay. It's not about feelings, it is about you honoring our Heavenly Father. He is a God who sits high and looks low. He knows your plight, He knows you are hurting. He is telling you "*Listen, you don't have to be thankful for where you are right this moment. I understand that it may not be the best place, but you are not anywhere that my love can't reach you. Grab on to it. Hold it tight. Stop looking back down that hole at all the mess you left behind. Just keep holding on and look towards me; I got you. I won't let you fall. I'm guiding you to the top, and that's what I want you to be thankful about....that I'm guiding you to the top.*"

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