

right thinking / right living

We continue to look at the well-known passage in Philippians 4v 1-9 with the theme of **worry about nothing and pray about everything.**

The idea of not worrying about anything seems so strange in these difficult times. However what I have discovered personally is that worry is often stoked by what I am focussed on. So if I focus on the things of the world the result will generally be anxiety.

RIGHT THINKING v8 - Wrong thinking invariably leads to wrong feelings. Proverbs 23:7 puts it this way; *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”*

Worry is wrong thinking that can lead us to having a wrong focus. For example if we focus on an issue, it can threaten to overwhelm us. If we focus on ourselves we can be overwhelmed by bitterness or self-pity. Focussing on someone else can lead to a desire for revenge or feelings of hate. So we should bring every thought to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 sums it up well, *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for tearing down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”*

Thoughts that are allowed to fester in our minds/imaginings can do all sorts of mischief in our lives, as one writer shows us – *Sow a thought, reap an action; Sow an action, reap a habit; Sow a habit, reap a character; Sow a character, reap a destiny.* So what should be our focus?

Whatever is true: Friends, worry has more to do with what is imagined or cannot be changed. One survey on worry revealed that only 8% of what we worried about had substance and 92%

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ His protection and care of the Challenge building and facilities
- ★ His ongoing provision for the work in Australia and overseas
- ★ His amazing faithfulness. Often we take time to remember back to see where God has taken us from and marvel at where we are today

was something we had imagined, never happened or could not be changed. We need to think upon those things which are true, i.e., genuine and sincere.

Then we need to think on whatever is honest and just i.e. worthy of respect and right. Again our focus is the issue. We should not dwell on things that are not respectable or wrong.

Whatever is pure, lovely and of good report: This has the idea of what is morally pure, which has important ramifications when we look at wrong things such as pornography.

Lovely: Speaks of something which is beautiful, attractive and or agreeable

Good report: Denotes something worth talking about. This can have an impact when it comes to things like gossip and the like

Virtue: Something that motivates us to do better

Praise: Infers something that is worth commending to others

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Meditate: To make things the subject of your thoughtful considerations. Obviously this can be applied to Psalm 19:14, *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight O Lord my strength and my redeemer.”*

Then the last thing we need to consider is how we put all this into practice.

RIGHT LIVING v9 - The key lesson here in overcoming our anxiety/worry is that we need to translate the theory of what we know we need to do, into action and in developing our prayer life.

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ The ongoing funding required for the Perth office, for personal support, for the supply of the Challenge paper globally and for overseas project funding
- ★ The prison ministry (USA & Africa) as chaplains request additional papers. Pray that during lockdown (Covid) prisoners will take time to read the paper and respond to Jesus
- ★ The upcoming launch of the paper (Spanish) into Cuba. Pray for the local churches as they begin to distribute and follow up with door to door visitation
- ★ The ongoing discipleship of new believers around the world

Paul was the consummate mentor investing into the lives of new converts but as good as he was it could only amount to growth, if

◆ Learning must be received. Obviously this means the mentored is humble and teachable.

1 Thessalonians 2:13, *“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”*

◆ Learning must be heard. In the OT the word for hear and obey is ‘shama’. The idea is you have not really heard until you have obeyed.

James 1:22 puts it similarly, *“But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

◆ Learning must be observed. We show an alertness to learn, an enthusiasm and willingness to learn as we observe others.

◆ Learning then must result in action. For most Christians this is a major issue. We can be learning, learning, learning and never get around to putting it into action especially when it comes to evangelism.

As we follow these steps the God of peace will be with us. The word for peace here is Eirene which not only indicates rest, but also wholeness, undisturbed, untroubled in spirit, and well-being.

In fact the presence of peace can be a good barometer as to whether we are in the will of God. So with the peace of God to guard us and the God of peace to guide us – why waste energy worrying?

Being anxious for nothing and praying about everything means, right praying, right thinking and then the outcome is right living.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }



MY RESPONSE

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