

Be careful for nothing

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[0 : 00] And once again, I want with you to turn to verse 6, where the apostle exhorts, Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Now, of all the subjects relative to the life and witness of the believer, few, I think, have received more in the way of attention than the subject of prayer.

And the importance of the subject can never, never be overrated. Yet, strange as it may seem, with all the attention the subject has received, not to speak of the volumes that have been written on the matter, However, it remains to many a subject which, generally speaking, our knowledge is all too limited.

Few of us, for example, realize the enormous potential of prayer, and even less of us exploit it to the full.

[1 : 57] It's not too much to say that, in some respects at least, the early Christians, the early Christians realized its potential, and their wonderful success was undoubtedly due to the fact that prayer was exploited to the full.

Now, it could be, but this is just a suggestion that I'm throwing out, it could be that the very desperateness of the situation in which the early Christians found themselves perhaps contributed.

I wouldn't like to stress or to emphasize that that alone was the case, but I believe that it did contribute in a large degree and enabled them, consciously or otherwise, to exploit prayer to the full.

And would to God, we, in our day and generation, would realize something of the enormous potential of prayer, and that realizing its enormous potential, we would exploit it to the full.

Of course, when we talk about, and the use of that word, exploit, in such a context, it almost sounds unsavory, but it's not.

[3 : 41] It's not. And I believe that God would have us exploit prayer to the full. Now, the apostle to the Gentiles devotes considerable attention to the subject in all his epistles, and indeed in this epistle before us.

Now, not only does he give advice here, as we can see quite clearly, he gives advice, but he also indicates that it can be a most rewarding experience in everything.

First of all, then, taking it in its entire context, be careful for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And briefly, the exercise of prayer, when properly used, is designed by God to remove unnecessary anxiety.

Now, if there is anything from which we all suffer, it's just that. Every one of us, if we're honest, at some time or another, it may be with us all the time, but, or if not, on many, many occasions, we all suffer from it.

[5 : 29] Over-anxiety. Now, of course, that doesn't mean that we are ceased to have any interest or any care whatsoever.

That is not what is meant at all. There is a place. There is a proper place for care, for interest, for concern.

But I do not believe in the providence of God that there is any place whatsoever for over-anxiety.

None at all. And the apostle would have us realize, as he does here and elsewhere, that nothing can be more damaging to one's spiritual experience.

There is, then, as we all know, the negative approach to all our problems. And I think you will agree with me that anxiety is one of these.

[6 : 41] Need I tell you? It's so easy for me to tell you, but I need to tell myself, too. As often as I tell you, anxiety, and no amount of it, ever solved any problem.

Have you ever known it to do so? It never solves any problems. But believe me, it tends to increase the problem and make things much more difficult than they are.

Now, the apostle here indicates, surely, the better approach, the positive. And that, indeed, which is best in our approach to every problem.

For he states, be careful for nothing. Be careful for nothing. But in everything.

In everything. Not in the things that we would select. Not in the things that are of importance to us. Whether they be important or of little importance.

[8 : 02] It matters not everything. But in everything. By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God.

One of the sad features of the day in which we live is that it seems to me It's a day in which tranquilizers and sedatives and drug addiction have a place in our society that they ought not to have.

There's no question about that. And one of the sad, one of the most tragic features of this is, you know, that many people are drug addicts and they don't know it.

They don't know it. Sometimes it's like the alcoholic. And this is one of the difficulties of the people who deal with the problem of alcoholism.

One of their major problems is, and basic to it, is just this. That many, many who are alcoholics don't believe it.

[9 : 32] They just don't believe it. And it's so easy. It's so easy. And this is what is happening.

This is what is taking place in our society today as a whole. Drug addiction is the curse of our day and age.

And what I said a moment ago, what is even more tragic, there are many, many people. And they're drug addicts and they don't know it.

And I think, you know, that this problem, as we see it, I think it could be solved and solved very, very quickly if only we followed the advice given by the apostle in everything.

Not in the things that we select, not in the problems that arise now and again, if not always, but in everything, in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

[11 : 03] Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear.

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Nothing is too insignificant for the Lord.

Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Bring everything to God and there would be a vast improvement in our Christian communities and indeed in society as a whole.

We then are not to be careful, as the word here, careful or anxious. And that word refers, of course, originally to undue concern.

Being filled with anxiety. Worrying ourselves unnecessarily. the cares and the responsibility.

[12 : 22] Yes, we all have them. We all have them. But what are we doing with them? Maybe we try to offload them on others.

Or maybe we try to cope with them ourselves. Don't you think it would be a thousand times better if we did with all our anxieties and all our worries and all our cares?

If only we would cast our burden on the Lord. And having cast it, leave it there. You know, human nature is very fickle.

Believe me. And sometimes, you know, this is just exactly what we do. Oh, yes. We're very, very diligent.

We bring our burden and we believe that we have cast it on the Lord. And you know, we've no sooner done that than we begin to worry.

[13 : 33] Has the Lord heard? Will the Lord hear? Do you think that he'll be concerned about this little problem and that little problem or whatever, or the big problem as the case may be?

That's not casting your burden on the Lord. If anything, I'll tell you what it is. If you want the truth, it's casting a reflection upon the Lord that he is not able, that he is not capable of undertaking or ministering to your particular need or mine as the case may be.

Well then, according to the apostle, all this is to be avoided. For indeed, as I said earlier, no amount of anxiety, no amount of concern, no amount of worry ever solved any problem.

And indeed, it's not likely to. So then, the better approach. And let us look at it. In a word, we are to take it to the Lord in prayer.

It's as simple as that. We are to take it to the Lord in prayer. Whether it be one problem or whether it be many problems, it matters not.

[15 : 05] We are exhorted to bring everything. Everything. God is concerned about the whole man and the whole woman and the whole of Christian experience.

He has no time for the fancy departments that we have created in our own lives and this is social and this is spiritual and perhaps we have something in between, I don't know.

But there it is. there is nothing of that in the divine plan as it operates. we must bring everything.

We must cast our burden upon the Lord and then as I said, we must leave it there. And let us never imagine for a moment that we're going to overburden overburden the Lord that you never can do.

You never can overburden the Lord. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or even think.

[16 : 39] But then as you look at the wording of this exhortation it suggests that in approaching God we should do so with reverence and godly fear.

Sometimes it may well be that the pressure of the burden is so much upon us and we are so if you like overawed with that problem that we forget that there is a right and a wrong approach to God.

There is a right way of doing everything and surely surely if we are coming with our need with our problem with our burden whatever it may happen to be surely we should come with reverence and with godly fear be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer prayer let us see to it then that we come with due reverence as we approach God prayer prayer indeed to be worthy of the name is any form of reverent address directed to God that's prayer every form of reverent address directed to

God and it seems to me that there's all too much of irreverence sometimes in our approaches to God and we're so some are so terribly particular and about the rights and the laws and these and the those and you and your well I frankly with all due respect however right it may be according to English I think it's very very much better that we should come with due reverence before God and whatever the correctness or otherwise be of what is stated

I feel personally that you and yours or your robs God of that reverence that is due unto his holy name we must then approach God with due reverence and with godly fear prayer is any form of reverent address directed to God how careful we are in addressing the lord high commissioner how careful we would be in addressing any member of the royal family are are we to exercise less care and less diligence and less reverence and less respect in our approaches to almighty god be careful for nothing then but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and again that word supplication suggests does it not the humble plea for the fulfillment of needs that are keenly felt that's what supplication means the humble plea for the fulfillment of needs that are keenly felt and there must also of course be the humble submission of the suppliant in which the goodness and sovereignty of god are always kept in mind not my will but thine be done and then you see here as the word suggests as we pass on to it just in a word the blessed results and the peace of god that passeth all understanding could you wish for more could you wish for more oh the utter folly then of our undue anxiety and care and worry in everything in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto god the peace of god which pathes passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through christ jesus now this wonderful result and it's worth noting is not because we have prayed nor yet that we have fulfilled all all the requisite conditions i think the phrase through christ jesus puts that matter right it settles it for all time for he and he alone is the one mediator

[23 : 35] between god and prayer and any prayer however good however wonderful it may be that doesn't pass through him is worthless and useless he is the one mediator between god and men the man christ jesus be careful then for nothing but in everything by prayer and thanksgiving by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and let us not forget the thanksgiving it's very important let your requests be known made known unto god and the peace of god that passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through christ jesus let us pray ever blessed and gracious god we give thee thanks for these moments around thy sacred word do do do thou o lord in thy grace and in thy mercy set thy seal upon the same and give us o lord we pray thee more and more to be taught of thee and to be taught of thy spirit and in all things to be directed of thee and enable us o lord to be submissive in everything to thy sovereign will and purpose we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen