

February 24, 2021

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. Philippians 4:6-7.

The above text offers five important truths that we should remember as Christians. It starts with the first six words. *Do not be anxious about anything.* In this letter to the Philippians, Paul is reiterating the very words Jesus spoke to His disciples. *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life ... Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Matthew 6:25-27.* Truth number one is, therefore, Listen and heed the words of Jesus and do not worry.

The second truth immediately follows: *...in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* The act of prayer acknowledges our need and dependence on Jesus. Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus urged us to bring our requests to God through prayer. *Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 6:6-8, Mark 11:22-25 Matthew 21:22.*

The third truth is found in that same passage, *by prayer and petition **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.* Giving thanks is an important component in releasing worry. The attitude of gratitude is acknowledged throughout the field of psychology as playing an important role in health and well-being. Giving thanks is also an exercise of faith, a conscious decision to thank God for receiving gifts not yet in evidence.

The fourth truth is *the peace of God ... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* This truth is one that can only be experienced through the process of implementing the first three truths. Release your worry by presenting your petitions to God. Give thanks to God in prayer – and the peace of God will follow.

The fifth truth is why the peace of God can guard our hearts and minds, because God's peace transcends all understanding: *... the peace of God, **which transcends all understanding**, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* One should not expect that we are ever going to come to God's understanding of the things that trouble us and challenge our faith. This is an exercise of faith, acknowledging that God understands it all, even when I do not.

I wish I could explain it in simple terms, so those that struggle to find such peace could be assured. My own walk with the Lord has not been a cakewalk of joy and peace. I will admit, however, it is because I hold on very tightly to things out of my control – trying to use spiritual powers to control them – and that is utter foolishness. The peace of God is, as Jesus said, not like the peace of the world. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27.*

Jesus follows this up, however, with instruction not to worry, not to be troubled, not to be afraid. The five truths can all be condensed into the greatest truth of all, and that is the truth that it is safe to trust in Jesus. *I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33.*