

Calm My Anxious Heart

Lesson Two: God's Heart in Contentment

~Speaker Carol Helland

All of us have anxiety, at times. And we may say: "Father, you've given me too much—you've given me too much to handle." And He says, "Give that to Me. Let me carry your anxieties." ~1 Peter 5:7

"Be anxious for nothing."

C: Continue to rejoice in the Lord.

A: Always pray in faith with thanksgiving.

L: Let God's peace guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

M: Meditate on God's Truth. ~Philippians 4:4-8

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4: 4-8 & 9-13 Paul writes: "I have learned the secret of contentment." So can we.

What Is Anxiety? a sense of uneasiness and apprehension about future events; thoughts we ruminate over and over again

Anxiety divides the mind—your thoughts between today and tomorrow. Are you enjoying today? Or are you ruining today by worrying about tomorrow?

Are you getting enough sleep? Nutrition, exercise, and sleep make a big difference in how we handle anxiety. God in His kindness has provided the night time for rest.

How precious are your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.

~Psalm 139:18

God watches over us in our sleep. We have an untired God. Help in facing our anxieties is tied to our physical and spiritual rest. That kind of rest doesn't come simply because you know a Bible verse. It's collapsing in who God is—His character.

A Note Written to a Friend (Psalm 121:3-4)

Do you involve God in your prayer? Do you find handholds and footholds in His character? Do you plead with Him on the basis of Who He is? Consider again His justice, His mercy, His faithfulness, His wisdom, His purity, His might, and His tenderness.

If you're hurting or if you're confused, find some attribute of your great God and grab onto it with all your might, asking Him to deal with you accordingly. Humbly hold Him to His promise.

God is delighted when you seek His will, His character, His glory, and yes, His heart—in your prayers. Pick an attribute of God: wisdom, mercy, purity, tenderness, justice, or some other character quality of your Lord. Meditate for a few moments on how marvelously God reveals Himself through that attribute.

In your prayers during the rest of the day—whether for your family or friends, for emergencies or incidentals—link all your requests to that special attribute of your heavenly Father. Not only will your prayers have power, but you will get to know God more intimately. ~Mrs. Donna Radtke

Observations on Anxiety:

1. **Anxiety identifies those things that are important to us.** The older we become, the more anxious we can become because we have more health issues and more people to love in our winter season of life than we did in the spring season.
2. **Each season of life has its own anxieties.** But with each passing season, we are asked to bring those anxieties to the Lord. It's as if the Lord says, "Let's talk about it again, dear child."
3. **Anxiety wants the right person.** We like to talk out our anxieties to someone we trust. We typically look for someone who loves us. And we have the best Person—the Lord Jesus. **We love Him because He first loved us.** ~1 John 4: 19

That is what the Cross was all about: to demonstrate His love for you. God loves you so much that He sent His only, perfect Son to pay your sin penalty. God proved His love for you at Calvary. And now Jesus Christ is risen at the right hand of the Father—a **compassionate Savior** who **is touched** with the **feelings** of your **anxieties**. ~Hebrews 4:15

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.
Cast all your **care** upon Him for He cares for you. ~1 Peter 5: 6-7

The two verses are one thought—one sentence in the Greek. They must be read together and applied together. One of the benefits of a relationship with Jesus Christ is the privilege of letting Him take care of you.

"I have come to learn the secret of being content in any and every situation." (4:11)

1. The **verb** (infinitive) "**to learn**" means "**learned by experience.**" We're not born with contentment. It does not come through will power or positive thinking.
2. "**Secret**": classified information on contentment for a believer in Jesus Christ.
3. "**Content**": a cousin of peace— "**the peace of God**" (Philippians 4:7). **Content means** to be possessed of unfailing strength; to be independent of external circumstances because we are dependent on Christ. The Holy Spirit gives us a **sweetness** that helps us to grow in our contentment about life. Contentment is not complacency. **Contentment** is a fruit of **abiding** or **resting** in Christ.

4. Our **culture** influences us more than we realize: **“I have learned in every situation to be discontent.”** **Social media** can make us discontent.

Do you have a “full house”? *“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain, we can carry nothing out.”* ~1 Timothy 6: 7

Observation: Contentment does not fall into our laps from money, status, possessions, people, or education. **“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.”** ~Jim Carey

God placed these desires in each of us to show that only Christ can fulfill them. God created us, so we are not satisfied with things.

Be content with such things as you have.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ~Hebrews 13:5

I think this is the most beautiful passage of Scripture. There are three negatives in the Greek: **“I will not, I will not, I will not let you down, leave you in the lurch, leave you destitute, abandon you.”** When you come to Christ by faith in His sacrifice on the Cross for you, He stands beside you, is present by His abiding Spirit, speaks through His Word to ward off discontentment and anxiety.

Comparing yourselves among yourselves is not wise. ~2 Corinthians 10:12 When we are anxious, we tend to compare more. *“Comparison is the thief of joy”* (Theodore Roosevelt).

“If only”—the petri dish in which anxiety grows and thrives. “If only” imprisons us in discontentment, a dreamworld where things should be different—and what a great life that would be! **But our dreamworld always lets us down.**

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward [wo]man is perishing, yet the inward [wo]man is being renewed day by day. ~2 Corinthians 4:16

We are renewed day by day through the power of the Holy Spirit’s inner resources—a daily renewal of our mind with the Truth of God’s Word. You do not lose heart because your value is not determined by your outward woman. Your value is determined by what God thinks about you. You are precious to Him. That’s why Christ died for you.

“Whatever is true, think on these things.” ~Philippians 4:8

The Lord is very concerned what goes on in our minds every day. What do you think about? What images are you putting in your mind? If you think something often enough, you can’t stop thinking about it. Negative self-perception repeated over time will brand those images into your mind and eventually become your reality. . . even though it’s a false reality. If you repeat a lie enough times, you begin to believe it.

As a believer in Jesus Christ, Scripture says you are **accepted, adopted, justified, reconciled, redeemed, free from condemnation, completely forgiven by God.**

Begin trusting what God thinks about you. Get up and look at yourself through God's eyes—not your own or someone else's.

*If then **you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **Set your mind on things above**, not on things on the earth.~ Colossians 3:1-2*

A believer is identified with Christ in His resurrection. Christ is our life. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. You must not only **seek heaven**; you must **think heaven**. This is a place where the glorified Savior, God the Son, is seated. His work of salvation is finished.

*But this Man, after He had **offered one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.** ~ Hebrews 10:12*

Jesus purchased a seat in the heavenlies for us at the price of His own precious blood.

Seated with Christ We have been seated with Christ—it already happened to us at the moment of our salvation (**Ephesians 2:6**). Imagine on a daily basis that you're seated with Christ in the heavenly realms—when you're going to work, feeding the kids, cooking at home, you are seated with Christ. **Seated means "I belong."**

When you become anxious because of a new expense, or you'll disappoint someone, or see another woman succeed, or think you're not good enough, tell yourself: "I'm seated with Christ. If I fail, God is in control; If I succeed, God is in control. If I don't get attention or affection or acknowledgment, I know I have the attention of my heavenly Father who covers me with His righteousness. His banner over me is love. He gives me the attention, affection, and acknowledgment for which I long."

I can—through Christ: "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." (13)

Here is the secret to contentment: The Lord gives us **His strength, His power**, to live with contentment in whatever the circumstance as we trust Him.

My God will meet all your needs according to the **riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.**"
(19)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Contentment has learned the lesson that Christ is enough.

He Leadeth Me

*Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine
Nor ever murmur, nor repine
Content, whatever lot I see
Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me.*