Upper Room Fellowship Ministry

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"
Philippians 4:4

In the light of the Cross

Volume 10, Episode III

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Matthew 6:34

"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Please pray that the Church will be awakened to the necessity of Spiritual Maturity through Discipleship Making.

Please pray for a return to holiness and reverential fear of God in our churches.

Matthew 6:26

"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

Do Not Worry, is a Commandment

We live in unstable times to say the least. The liberal media paints the economy in gloomy terms that make any news-listeners depressed. I am not sure why they call it *news* anyway! I think they should call it *bad-news*. Issues with the car industry, financial institutions, unemployment, housing market, and the list goes on. It gives you major headaches. Now, tell me how is one not supposed to worry? The reality is that, now more than in the past, Christians and non-Christians alike are anxious about life. If Christians react in the same way as non-Christians to life circumstances, how can they be witnesses to non-believers?

Paul writes from prison to the church in Philippi, *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God"* (**Phil. 4:6**). You see, most of us (and I am first guilty of this) take this verse as a negotiable Scripture, but it is not. **This is a commandment not a suggestion.** Paul says: "Be anxious for nothing." He does not say, "Well, brethren, if you consider it good advice take it, if not leave it. Whatever you consider, do it." No, Paul boldly tells us, Do not worry about anything. *Anything*, means *no matter what*. Do not worry about finances, food, clothes, health, shelter, energy crisis, end of the world, etc. ***Do not worry about anything***. The word used in the NASB version of the Bible *anxious*, which means: full of mental distress or uneasiness because of *fear* of danger or misfortune. You see, worry works hand-in-hand with fear. Fear is, in a way, the opposite of faith. In other words, when we worry about something, it practically means that we don't believe that God is going to take care of that thing, and our mind enters in distress. Paul is not just giving us a commandment and leaves us hanging. No, he gives us a practical way to deal with all these situations. In the same verse, he says, "but in everything … let your request be made known to God." Sometimes we need to pray, sometimes we need to insistently bring our petition before God, and sometimes we just simply need to thank God for provisions He has already supplied. Immediately after this exercise of faith, we have the promise of God for our lives. *"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Je-*

sus" (**Phil. 4:7**).

When we are anxious, our minds and our hearts are in terrible distress, right? We cannot sleep well because of stress. Our blood pressure goes up. Our immune system becomes weak. We are prone to get sick easily. Why? Because we do not trust that God will take care of us, and deliver us from whatever situation we are in. **We act as unbelievers.**

Many times, in my sermons, I would stop here. But please notice that Paul does not stop here. He continues on the next verse with what we need to do. After we receive the peace of God over our minds and hearts, we need to engage our minds with something else. Let's see what Paul is saying in v. 8. *"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things"* (**Phil. 4:8**). So, we have to set our minds to truth, to noble and delightful things for the heart and mind, to right and pure things. We are required to dwell on things of good report, of excellent quality and worthy of admiration.

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There is a spiritual law in action all the time. The Bible verse that contains this principle is in **Colossians 3:2** *"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."* This principle sounds like this, **"Set your mind on Godly things, if not the mind, by default, will set itself on worldly things."** In other words, if we don't exercise this option by a conscientious act, our minds are going to be invaded by all sorts of aspects that will cause anxiety and fear.

The Lord Jesus tells us the same thing. *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?"* (**Matt. 6:31**). Food, water, and clothing, are the basic necessities of life. Surprisingly**, the heavenly Father knows about all these aspects of life and promises that He will supply all that is necessary for us.** (See Matt. 6:32). We don't have to act as the people around us who do not know God and have no hope. We don't have to became greedy and fall into the materialistic and consumerist-type philosophy like the outside culture. Jesus commands us to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. (See Matt. 6:33). This is our part. God's part is to supply our life's necessities.

Paul continues in Philippians 4 with more insights for us. I sincerely believe that verse 13, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"* is the most misused and misquoted verse in the Bible. This is not a verse that Christians should use in order to get whatever they want. The context of verse 13 is what we have been discussing thus far. To be exact, this is a verse that assures us that in the spiritual training that God does with us there is nothing that Christ cannot do it thorough us. Please look carefully at the previous verse. Paul tells us, *"I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."* Paul tells his story. There is a secret in verse 12. Paul practiced total dependence upon God's provisions. He learned the secret of being obedient to God. In other words Paul is saying: "Give me prosperity, it is not changing me. Give me only the basic necessities of life, I am OK with that too. Give me a big meal. Thank you! I appreciate it. Let's fast for 14 days, No problem let's do it." This is: *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."* This is what I believe Paul is saying here. We cannot just pick and choose what fits our selective theology. We have to look at the context. I hope that it makes more sense for you now. God bless you. Yours in Christ, *Valy Vaduva*.

"But a cheerful heart has a continual feast"
Prov. 15:15(b).