

**Philippians 4:4-8** (NIV) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.

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- In this passage, the Apostle Paul makes some very bold statements.
    - Rejoice in the Lord \_\_\_\_\_
    - Do not be anxious about \_\_\_\_\_
  - This has always been a struggle for people, but our culture has some unique factors that make it incredibly pertinent today. According to several studies cited in *Anxious for Nothing* by Max Lucado:
    - In a given year, nearly fifty million Americans will feel the effects of a panic attack, phobias, or other anxiety disorders.
    - Anxiety disorders in the United States are the number one mental health problem among women and are second only to alcohol and drug abuse among men.
    - Stress-related ailments cost the nation \$300 billion every year in medical bills and lost productivity.
    - The average child today exhibits the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the 1950s.

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  - Did Paul really mean that we can get to the place where we are never anxious? Paul wrote the phrase in the present active tense, which implies an ongoing state. It's the life of perpetual anxiety that he wanted to address.
    - There are elements of both the physical and the spiritual when talking about anxiety. For many of us, the physical effects of anxiety have their roots in a spiritual problem.
    - We have broken \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that cause mental and emotional problems.

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  - Each week, we will be looking at an aspect from the acronym C.A.L.M. – Celebrate, Ask, Leave, Meditate.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ God's goodness.
  - Paul's prescription for anxiety begins in verse 4 with a call to rejoice – *rejoice in the Lord always*.
    - To rejoice in the Lord means to understand and celebrate who God is and what that means for us.
    - Two aspects of God worth celebrating are:
      - God's sovereignty
      - God's goodness
    - God's \_\_\_\_\_ - God is in control, not us.

- Sovereignty is the term the Bible uses to describe God’s perfect control and management of the universe. He is continually involved with all created things, *including me and my life*, directing them to act in a way that fulfills His divine purpose.

**Psalm 139:1-5** (NLT) <sup>1</sup>O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. <sup>3</sup>You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. <sup>4</sup>You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. <sup>5</sup>You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head.

- In the treatment of anxiety, a proper understanding of sovereignty is huge. Anxiety is often the consequence of perceived chaos. If we sense we are victims of unseen, turbulent, random forces, we are troubled.

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- God's \_\_\_\_\_ - It’s not just enough, though, to know God is sovereign. We have to understand and believe God is good, as well!
  - The Bible is an entire book outlining God’s goodness: 1) He created us. 2) He lets us know how to live a blessed life. 3) He provides all we need. 4) He promises to always be near, no matter what we go through. 5) Salvation and redemption found in Jesus!
- When we understand God's sovereignty and His goodness, it changes the way we view the world.
  - We understand that He uses all things to accomplish His purposes.
  - The story of Joseph in Genesis 37-47 is a great example of this!
- Why does God permit challenges to come our way? Wouldn’t an almighty God prevent them? Not if they serve His higher purpose.
  - The ultimate proof of God’s goodness is the death of Christ on the cross. No deed was more evil. Yet God not only knew of the crucifixion but He also ordained it.
  - The resurrection showed God’s sovereignty and His power over even death, and it was the greatest way God could show how much He loves us.
- We can choose our perspective and how we view the events and circumstances of our lives.
  - We can focus on solving life's problems, or on the God who is in control and is good.
  - True relief does not come when a problem is resolved, for more problems will come. True relief comes from understanding God is in control and is good.

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**NEXT STEPS:**

1. Are you regularly anxious? This week, track how many times you get that way.
2. Do you view God as both sovereign and good? This week, read Psalms of David that deal with anxiety and a right perspective of God. (Psalm 13, 22, 23, 27, 30, 31, 40, 62, 69, 70, 138, 140, 143)
3. Celebrate God. Identify times in your life when God has proved himself both Sovereign and Good.

For additional resources regarding this topic, go to: [www.rlmcda.com/portfolio/anxiety-resources](http://www.rlmcda.com/portfolio/anxiety-resources)  
or [www.reallifeministries.com/anxiety-resources](http://www.reallifeministries.com/anxiety-resources)