



Wayne's Words

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Rejoice in the Lord Always

Philippians 4:4-7

'Rejoice in the Lord always! ... Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.'

These words from Paul's letter to the Philippians pack so much excellent mental health advice into one paragraph. And it doesn't cost you a cent.

Joy is God's gift. It is also our choice to rejoice even when things don't go well. Not that we are to live in denial or avoid the healing process of grief and honesty of lament. But rather to express trust in God no matter what befalls. *'The joy of the Lord is our strength'. 'Jesus, for the joy set before him, endured the cross...'*

What paralyses our joy, however, is anxiety. So, the remedy to this is not a change in our circumstances, but in our thinking. We are instructed not to be anxious. Easier said than done. It is a matter of faith and obedience to God for us to recognise our anxiety and refuse to entertain it. Instead, we are to instantly turn to prayer and hand it over to God, putting the matters we worry about in his hands and leaving them there, with thanksgiving that God is able and willing to deal with them. In this way we are acting responsibly and proactively, for anxiety never solved anything.

Furthermore, we are promised peace. Not that we have ceased to care. But we are no longer accepting complete responsibility on our own for what is not within our control anyway. We have invited God into the situation and so a burden shared is a burden halved. More than this – we are in a state of mind to receive wisdom from God about our issue and to act in a way that is more likely to be fruitful. We are also in a place to see God at work.

So may I commend this prescription for anxiety – the daily meditation and practice of Philippians 4:4-7. And feel free to let me know how you get on.

God bless,

Wayne