

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

Part 1 - Anxiety

3 John 2 → *Beloved, I pray that you may PROSPER in all things and be in HEALTH, just as your SOUL prospers.*

PRINCIPLE: As it goes with your SOUL, so it will go with EVERY OTHER FACET of your life.

→ *Do you agree with this principle? Is it too simplistic, perhaps – are there other factors? Have you experienced times in your life when your soul has been full, fit and flourishing and all has seemed well, or other times when the reverse has been the case?*

→ *How do you keep when your soul is not well? Do you self-medicate or try to escape or live in denial?*

SOUL = EMOTIONAL well-being, MENTAL health, state of MIND, deep INNER SELF.

→ *What do you understand by the word 'soul'? Does the Bible use it in slightly different ways?*

GOD'S HEART for you is reflected in John's prayer. Jesus died to set you FREE, make you WHOLE, release you from the PAST, change your THINKING and dig TRUTH deep. The gospel is GOOD NEWS.

→ *THE BIG Q: Is it well with your soul? How are you doing at the moment? What are the ups and downs? What would you like to see changed?*

Proverbs 23:7 → *For as he THINKS in his HEART, so IS HE.*

Matthew 12:34 → *For out of the ABUNDANCE of the HEART the MOUTH SPEAKS.*

* What's on the INSIDE will eventually COME OUT and it's SHAPING you powerfully, whether you're aware of it or not.

→ How do these verses apply, both in a positive and negative sense?

THE PSALMISTS CAPTURED THE STRUGGLE

1. Inviting God to SEARCH, TEST & RESTORE his soul (Psalm 139:23-24).
2. The Psalmist telling his soul to FALL IN LINE (Psalm 42:5-6)
3. Recognising that God's Word is MEDICINE to the WEARY soul (Psalm 42:5).

THE PIT OF ANXIETY

→ *Describe the pit of anxiety? Have you ever been in there? How does one escape? How does one avoid it?*

The enemy is after your PEACE and JOY.

* He wants to deflate your CONFIDENCE, disturb your REST, confuse your DECISION-MAKING, sabotage your RELATIONSHIPS and clutter your thinking with DOUBTS.

→ *Does the enemy attack you in any of these areas? Where are you most vulnerable?*

Do you live in what seems like a CONSTANT STATE OF UNSETTLEDNESS, fear, worry and stress? Or, if you don't live there, do you VISIT there MORE OFTEN than you'd like?

→ *Where do you fit along that continuum? How often do you find yourself in a state of at least partial anxiety, worry or stress? Do you visit there more often than you'd like? Is it possible to never o there?*

- * The CLAMMY FEAR that torments you under the shadow of bad news.
- * Relational STRIFE, real or imagined.
- * Intoxicating feeling of STRESS, demands you just can't meet.

Parable of the Sower tells us worry CHOKES the WORD (Matt 13:22).

Jesus taught that worry WEIGHS DOWN your heart (Luke 21:34).

Peter wrote about the SPIRITUAL WARFARE element of anxiety (1 Pet 5:7-9).

→ *How does anxiety affect you? Mentally? Emotionally? Spiritually? Even physically?*

7 PRINCIPLES FROM PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

1. PRAISE & THANK HIM (v4, Psalm 146:1-2)
 - * Both powerful ANTIDOTES to fear + anxiety.
 - * The DISCIPLINE of FOCUSING on God and His goodness.
2. WALK IN RELATIONAL PEACE (v5a)
 - * Takes WORK and INTENTIONALITY; really helps if you walk in the spiritual fruit of GENTLENESS.
3. PRACTISE HIS PRESENCE (v5b, James 4:7-8, Psalm 42:1-2)
 - * When we're CLOSE to the Lord everything looks very DIFFERENT.
4. DRAW A LINE IN THE SAND (v6a)
 - * The IMPERATIVE: Recognition that your WILL is involved.
5. TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER (v6b)
 - * The prayer of COMMITMENT (1 Peter 5:7 AMP)
6. RECEIVE THE ANOINTING OF SURPASSING PEACE (v7, Proverbs 4:23, John 14:27).
 - * There's a BETTER way of living – a SUPERNATURAL way: learning to tap into that SURPASSING, TRANSCENDING peace.
7. RUN YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH A WORD FILTER (v8)
 - * Take your anxious thoughts CAPTIVE at source.

→ *Which of those principles jumps out at you? Which are most helpful to you when you're struggling? Which are you weakest in / which do you think could protect you personally from anxiety and its effects, were you to become stronger in it?*

GOOD NEWS: Do all that and you get to have v9!

→ *Describe what an anxiety-free life would look and feel like?*

RESPONSE

1. What are flashpoints / catalysts that make you anxious? Take whichever of Phil 4 principles jumps up and down to you and apply it like medicine into your soul.
2. Are you ANXIOUS constantly? How can your group pray for you? There is enormous transformative power in Phil 4:4-9 and it's available to you, today.
3. If ANXIETY is not a problem for you, perhaps Lord has MINISTRY for you? What do you have that you can IMPART? And how might the Lord use you to IMPART it?