

—Phil 4.5-7—

Lesson 2 – Understanding Anxious Care

- I. Reasons why God's people should not be taken up with such an anxious carefulness about the things of this life, Mt 6.25-34.
 - A. The Lord is at hand, near to all those who call upon Him, v.5; Pss 27, 46, 56.
 - B. It's useless and won't help you.
 1. There's no more way to increase or secure your outward concerns than there is to add an inch to your height, Mt 6.27. Worry is not the way to wealth. Rather, blessing comes from the Lord as a matter of grace, Js 1.17. God gives His people what they need and they never need to lose sleep in seeking it, Ps 127.2.
 2. God blesses diligence but He never blesses this anxious carefulness. This carefulness is the way to lose what you have and what you get. It's the way to make it or the comfort of it wither, to make it a burden to you or your children, and to endanger it instead of secure it.
 - C. It's needless.
 1. Your Father already knows what you need, Mt 6.32. All that you're tempted to be careful about is cared for already, and by One who can infinitely better look after it than you can. If all the creatures in heaven and earth should faithfully engage themselves to care for your concerns, wouldn't you think that a good reason not to worry about them? But you have unspeakably more! God has engaged Himself to take care of you, Ps 56.9, to see that you lack nothing good, Ps 84.11, to see that nothing befalls you but what's best for you, and to take such good care of you that you don't have to. Your carefulness is needless. He's the all-wise, all-mighty, all-sufficient, and infinitely merciful God. Cast all your cares upon Him, 1Pet 5.7. Just consider:
 - a) What He'll do for you, Phil 4.19.
 - b) What He's done for you already, Mt 6.25. You had no care when you were in the womb, and He took care of you, Ps 139.16. How much more will He do so now? You don't need to worry about earthly things now any more than you did in the womb.
 - c) What He does for others, Mt 6.26, 28-30; Ps 104.16-18, 21, 27-28; 147.8-9; 1Cor 9.9.
 - D. It's heathenish, Mt 6.32. It's the character of a heathen to be anxious about the things of this life.
 - E. It's hurtful.
 1. If you won't trust God with your affairs then He'll be obliged to leave them in your hands so you can see how costly such anxiety is, Jer 17.5-6. If you don't cast your burden on the Lord, then He'll likely let you fall under it. Either way, you'll have no assurance that your feet won't slip and fall under the pressure.
 2. You lose what you have, or at least the comfort and benefit of what you have, because carefulness will eat it all up, 1Kgs 21.4.
 3. It'll keep you from being the servants of Christ, so far as you give way to it, Mt 6.24. The more anxious you are about outward things, the less anxious you'll be to serve the Lord.
 4. It corrupts the whole soul and life, Mt 6.22-23.
 5. It hinders the efficacy of the ordinances and spoils the use of them. Cares of the world choke the Word, making it unfruitful, Mt 13.22. Moreover, it spoils our prayers and thoughts about heavenly things because it crowds them out.
 6. It keeps us from joy in God and disturbs our peace, 1Tim 6.9-10, 17-19.
 - F. It's very sinful and reveals much evil still in the heart of God's people. *It reveals:*

1. An unwillingness to submit to God, Isa 50.11.
 - a) Anxiety reveals a heart not submitted to the will of God and not willing to have its concerns ordered and disposed of as He thinks fit. Instead, in its place, there's an intolerable pride and self-confidence that exalts its wisdom and will above God's.
 - (1) Anxiety must have its own will, its own way, and its own outcome, and it's unwilling to submit to God in any of these things.
 - (2) A submissive heart is content to have its concerns ordered—as to much or little, as to dangers or safety, as to sufferings or deliverance—as the Lord sees best or thinks fit. It refers all to God and rests quietly in His hands. *But when the heart is anxious and troubled, it's because it cannot submit.*
 - (3) The Lord says it'll go well with the righteous in every condition, Isa 3.10. But the anxious heart says, “how can it go well with such a lack, loss, trouble, and suffering that has befallen me? If the Lord orders my way like this, I don't see how it could be well so I'll take care of it myself.”
 - (4) The Lord sees it good that a man be kept low, in want, troubled, and afflicted; but the anxious man thinks it's better to live prosperously, and therefore will give see to these things himself and won't submit to the providences that cross his goals. Instead, he proudly crosses God and advances his own will and judgment ahead of the wisdom and pleasure of God.
2. Unbelief, Mt 6.30.
 - a) To trust in the Lord is expressed by casting our burdens upon Him and committing our way to Him, Ps 37.5; Lk 12.28. But he that'll take this care upon himself, will not and does not cast it upon God, and so doesn't trust Him. He'd rather trust himself than God. He doubts in his heart that God is able or willing to order his affairs as he thinks they should be and so he refuses to leave them in God's hands but will look after them himself. This is unbelief.
3. A lack of mortification.
 - a) From whence does all this anxiousness come over outward things, but from our hearts desires that are fed by these things and live upon them, and refuse to be starved by giving the care of them up to God—because He may very well not provide them. As our selfish desires die, our cares will die; but while our desires are so violent and craving, they're far from being mortified, Rom 13.14; Gal 5.24.
4. A great immoderation toward the world and an excess of affection to it, 1Jn 3.15; Js 4.4.
 - a) If we didn't love the things of this present world more than we should, desire them more than we should, and delight in them more than we should, we wouldn't be so anxious about them.
 - b) If we were more crucified to the world, and the world was more crucified to us, this anxiety would cease, Gal 6.14, because a heart crucified to the world is indifferent toward it. Whether we have little or much doesn't matter, as long as we have enough to serve God with. Whether we be afflicted or prosperous doesn't matter, as long as our souls prosper in every condition.
5. A neglect of heaven, Mt 6.33, 24.
 - a) If we mind earthly things more than we should then our conversation can't be in heaven, Phil 3.19-20.