



**Conversation with God – Part 11**  
**Philippians 4:6-7**  
**GCSP – 02/14/2009**

*Dear Sir,*

*I am writing in response to your request for additional information in block #3 of the accident report form. I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details will be sufficient.*

*I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found I had some bricks left over which, when weighed later were found to be slightly in excess of 500 lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.*

*Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the bricks. You will note in block #11 of the accident report form that my weight is 135 lbs. Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope.*

*Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.*

*In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel which was now proceeding downward at an equally impressive speed. This explains the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collarbone, as listed in Section 3 of the accident report form.*

*I slowed only slightly, and continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of the excruciating pain I was now beginning to experience. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks, that barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs.*

*I refer you again to my weight. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.*

*In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth and severe lacerations of my legs and lower body. Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain, unable to move, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope and I lay there watching the empty barrel begin its journey back onto me.*

*This explains the two broken legs.*

I assume most of you have heard this humorous story before of how one mistake builds upon another. Our worries and cares have a tendency to do the same. If you allow yourself to dwell upon your problems your imagination can create all kinds of unrealized troubles.

Some suggest when you are making plans to consider a worst case scenario in order to be properly prepared. Some people have become certified experts in the field of considering worst case scenarios. They can tell you every possible thing that can go wrong and probably will go wrong in your life.

If you get out of bed you will eventually have to have some breakfast and you just never know if the worker at the factory washed his hands before handling the cereal that went into that box; you don't even know if the plastic in the box is sanitary. And who knows what kind of diseases the cow had that gave the milk you are about to pour on that cereal, or what drugs and hormones have been injected into the cow to cause them to produce more milk, or if the milk was transported and stored at the proper temperatures from the dairy to the distributor to the store. And can you really trust the freshness dates stamped on the milk carton anyway?

And what if there are drugs floating around in your milk? What if those drugs have a bad reaction in your body and cause you to get sick or even tired while you are driving to work? You could fall asleep at the wheel and get into a horrible accident leaving you paralyzed for the rest of your life. How will your family survive if you are paralyzed and can't earn an income? Your kids will be on the streets begging for bread and if they spend too much time on the streets they will probably get involved in a gang, do drugs, shoot a policeman and spend the rest of their life in jail. And the things that go on inside of jails...

Now that was a little ridiculous but I trust you see how your worries and cares can easily multiply – all because you got out of bed.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Philippians**.

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

Let's pray.

We should pay attention to the details of our lives but we should not allow unrealized troubles to control us in any way. It has been estimated that 98% of the things we worry about never come to pass. And of the 2% that do come to pass, half are issues we can have direct control over the eventual outcome and the other half is completely out of our control. What profit is there in worrying about something you have absolutely no control over? And instead of worrying about the 1% you do have control over just get busy handling it.

The opening of **verse 6** says to be anxious, or careful, for nothing. The use of the Greek word translated here means to have unnecessary anxiety; it means you are full of care over something that need not be cared about. We should be living carefree lives regardless of our current circumstances. One of the great benefits of being a child of

God is that you are a child of God! God is fully in control of all things. God takes care of His own. God provides for His children. God protects His children. God's thoughts toward us are as numerous as the grains of sand on all of the beaches and deserts of the world. God knows how many hairs are on your head at this very moment. God knows the condition of your bank account, the condition of your physical health, and what you are going to face tomorrow and the next day and the next. You should be living a carefree and worry-free life!

"That sounds good in theory Al, but let's be real about this. It's impossible to not worry."

**1 Peter 5:7** says that we are to cast most of our care on Jesus because He cares for us. Is that what it says? No, it says to **cast all your care on Him**. If you have any worry or care or anxiety in your life, according to this verse it is simply because you are disobeying God's Word; it's because you have only cast some or most of your care on Him, not all of it. Or it means you didn't cast it far enough or you went back and retrieved it. To cast is to throw and the word implies an almost violent throwing. You are separating your cares and anxiety from you by a good margin; out of reach like throwing a rock into a lake.

The Apostle Paul gives us some practical steps and thoughts in how to eliminate worry and anxiety from your life.

#### The Substitute for Care

We have a great substitute for worry – prayer. **Verse 6** says, "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**"

Worriers are people who cannot relinquish control. Those who are full of care are in a never ending quest to have control over everything about their life, to the point that life is miserable and not worth living. Control is an illusion; you can't control your next heartbeat or breath, what makes you believe you can control everything and everyone else? The pursuit of control is an utter waste of energy and will steal your joy. Control freaks don't smile or laugh near as much as God intends for us to. God has offered us joy unspeakable and when we pursue control we are telling Him, "No thanks, I would rather live in misery."

Our verse tells us to substitute every care, every worried thought, every anxious moment with a thankful prayer. Every fretful thought should immediately be converted into a prayer. Don't dwell on the problem. Don't hang onto it for a second longer than you have to. Your problems are like a piece of coal that God can instantly compress into a diamond when it is transferred into a prayer. Allow your worries to in essence become spiritual treasures in the form of a prayer. Baptize every anxiety in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and so make it into a blessing.

Often we are faced with situations in which there seems to be no solution. We become almost paralyzed with a sense of helplessness. We don't know if we should turn right, turn left, move straight ahead, or turn back. We are lost in a fog, or more appropriately for us here in the mountains, a whiteout. Or you feel like you would in a strange city with no map to get you where you desire to be.

Have you ever been in a strange place with no clue as to how to get around but you were with a friend or a family member who did know how to get around? When we have friends or family who come to visit us in the mountains for the first time, we do not leave it to chance or them being able to follow a map in order to find our house. We usually meet them on a main highway and have them follow us to our house. We in essence become their map.

Jesus says, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life."** In other words, when you have no clue which direction to take when a problem or situation arises in your life, take it to Jesus; He is the way, He is your map. Let Him guide you and lead you through the choppy waters. Give Him the charge of dealing with the situation and cast that care upon Him. Then relax, allow your joy to resurface, and simply follow Him out of the fog, or out of the whiteout, or through the storm.

When we choose to try and handle things in our own strength and ingenuity we can easily be deceived. The Children of Israel were commanded by God to drive all the inhabitants of the Promised Land out; they were to make no alliances or treaties with anyone within the borders of the land God gave them. The Gibeonites knew they could not stand against Israel's army so they devised a plan. They sent an envoy of men to Israel's camp wearing badly worn out shoes and carried with them hard, crusty, and moldy bread. They told the leaders they were from a far country and desired to make a covenant with them of peace between their nations. The physical evidence seemed to prove their story true, so Israel made a covenant with them without consulting with God. Instead of casting this care upon the Lord they took care of it themselves. The Gibeonites had deceived them, Israel did not drive them from the Promised Land, and they were a thorn in Israel's side for decades and centuries to come.

Many worry about the future. What am I going to do when I get old? Are you sure that you will ever grow old? Do you even know what tomorrow holds? I've even heard of people who are concerned and worried about how they will be buried – think about that one for a moment.

Make the commitment to turn every subject of care into a subject of prayer. Then even if you have a multitude of cares you will have a multitude of prayers.

Undue care is an intrusion into God's business. When you hang onto your cares you are making yourself the master of the house when you are called to be the servant. But when you convert your cares into prayers they are no longer intrusions but welcome invitations.

Practically speaking, our cares are of no use to us; they can only cause great damage to our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Worry has absolutely no effect on your problem but it has a tremendous effect on you. All manner of sickness and disease is either caused by or worsened by worry. I haven't studied this out enough to be dogmatic, but Scripture appears to support that we can open the door for sickness in our life by worrying about it.

Every year I had a two-month battle with allergies and several sinus infections. When one came along I resigned myself to it and spoke of how it was just “my” allergies or “my” sinus infection. This past year I determined in my heart that I was not going to claim late summer as “my” allergy season and lo and behold I did not suffer from allergies this year. Again, I have not studied this topic in Scripture enough to be dogmatic but I do not believe in coincidences. I never looked at claiming these allergies and sinus infections as worrying about them, but I did always look at the calendar with an eye toward September to prepare for “my” allergy season.

Worry causes stomach ulcers, digestive problems, is a contributor to heart disease and some cancers, and a multitude of other physical ailments. Worry has an effect on your appetite and even how food tastes – and no, this is not a good idea for losing weight. On the other hand, worry causes others to eat too much, which leads to a host of other physical problems. Worry makes you emotionally unstable and jittery. And ultimately, worry is sin, and it damages your relationship with God. You cannot fully put your trust in God and worry at the same time.

Does worry change anything? Have you ever worried about your finances and had your worry deposit funds into your accounts? Have you ever worried all night about your health and woke up healed and full of energy the next day? Have you ever worried your children into a better situation? Have you ever worried yourself into a better job?

Why do we allow our worries to gnaw at our hearts, and minds, and souls when we get nothing of value in return? And besides, how passionately do you praise and glorify God when you are full of care and anxiety? How aware are you of opportunities to minister to or witness to others when your mind is preoccupied with your cares? A heart full of care hinders your spiritual sight. It would be like smearing a layer of Crisco on the lens of your telescope before looking up into the stars; you won't see anything but a blur.

If you fail to convert your cares and worries into prayers you will be doomed to carrying burdens through life that were not meant for you to carry; and eventually those burdens will crush you.

Cares and worries are also the result of forgetting Christ. Before our verse says to **be anxious for nothing**, the previous verse ends with “**The Lord is near.**” The reason we can be anxious for nothing is because the Lord is near. So when we are anxious or full of care, we are forgetting that the Lord is near or we are ignoring the fact that the Lord is near.

How stubborn can we be? When I come home from grocery shopping, I try to carry as many bags and boxes as I possibly can on my trips from the car to the kitchen. Connie used to come running over and try to help me, try to take some of the burden from me, but I wouldn't let her. After years of being turned away when she offered to help, she no longer bothers to even try most of the time.

The Lord is near. His capable hands are stretched out and open, ready and willing to take your burdens from you. Yet, how often do you refuse His help? How many times do you simply walk by Him carrying your heavy load? How many times have you literally

pushed Him out of the way? I truly believe some people like carrying their own burdens and cares and anxiety and worries. Some people aren't happy unless they're miserable.

#### The Characteristics of This Prayer

First, it is a prayer that deals with everything. The verse says "**in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**" God doesn't want you holding back. Don't you dare draw a line that limits God's care! You can pray about the smallest thing and about the largest thing. You can pray for the impossible and for the easiest of things. You can pray for the Holy Spirit to manifest His power in your life and you can pray for a new pair of boots. Daily necessities are not too small for Him and great perplexities are not too difficult for Him.

Secondly, it is a prayer that allows us to repeat ourselves. The verse says "**prayer and supplication.**" Prayer is supplication and supplication is prayer. If we do not receive an immediate answer we can rest assured that we have a valid reason to let our requests be made known again; and again; and again. There is a great difference between vain repetition, which the Bible condemns, and simply repeating a need before the Lord. We are to be persistent in presenting our requests to the Lord. Don't take your worry back, but be persistent in your prayers about everything. The prayer that kills your cares is prayer that perseveres.

Next, it is an intelligent prayer; "**Let your requests be made known to God.**" God already knows what you need but we must ask Him as if he doesn't know. As we take the time to articulate our requests we will actually discover what our true requests are ourselves. You will know what you have asked, why you have asked, or you may stop yourself and realize this request is not good. Sometimes when you continue to pray for something the Lord does not supply the Spirit may be directing you that you are not on the right track with your request. Stating your case plainly and intelligently before the Lord will help you sort through what is truly important and allow the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers to what you truly need.

Lastly, it is a thankful prayer; "**with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**" The kind of prayer that kills all your care and worry is one that is presented to God cheerfully, joyfully, and thankfully. And why wouldn't it be? God is the only One who can supply your need, heal your physical afflictions, and provide for your lack. You should be cheerful, joyful, and thankful when you let your requests be made known to the One who can fulfill your requests. If you always remember to mix prayer with thanksgiving you will have found the cure for worry.

#### The Sweet Effect of This Prayer

"**And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**" If you can pray in this fashion, instead of indulging your anxiety and worries, you will experience a supernatural peace. You won't know why or how it is even possible to experience this kind of peace in your current set of circumstances, but you will. Those around you will be scratching their heads walking past you with puzzled looks on their faces; they will be amazed that you can have such peace in the midst of your trial. They may even come to you to ask you how you can possibly be handling your problems with such grace and peace of mind; which will open the door for you to glorify God and give witness to the power of God in your life.

This supernatural peace is the same supernatural peace that God has given to the martyrs through the centuries. One such man, who was about to be burned at the stake for his faith in Jesus Christ, asked the executioner to come and place his hand on his heart. He then asked if he felt his heart beating fast. The executioner had to say no. He then asked to place his hand on his own heart and asked who was more worried?

Another man who was to be burned at the stake had to be awakened out of a sweet and sound sleep. Yet another who was placed in a sort of rotisserie to be roasted alive had the peace and presence of mind to say, "I am done on this side, please turn me over."

We have the biblical example of Stephen in **Acts 7** who was looking into heaven and calmly speaking to God as the stones were being hurled down upon him. We read about the many beatings and afflictions the Apostle Paul endured with this same supernatural peace.

This supernatural peace is a guardian of our hearts and minds. When we pray in this manner, God's peace literally protects us from the cares and worries and anxieties that we have cast upon Him. The Greek wording implies a garrison or a battalion of soldiers who are now in place to guard your heart and your mind against what once so perplexed and worried you.

And finally, this peace links us to Jesus; "**in Christ Jesus.**" The supernatural peace we can and will experience becomes even more precious as we rest in Christ Jesus.

The choice is yours: You can attempt to be in control and allow your worries and cares to rule your heart and mind, or you can convert your cares to prayers and experience a supernatural peace and have your heart and mind guarded by a garrison of angels.

Doesn't seem like a very difficult choice to me.

Let's pray.