

BILL ZECHMANN

Be **ANXIOUS** For Nothing



Principles for Living

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by Bill Zechmann



Principles for Living

www.principlesforliving.org

Be Anxious For Nothing

Is it wrong to be anxious about something?

If I anticipate something, can there be negative effects from it? How much should or shouldn't we look forward to something? If I am anxious, does it show a lack of trust? Why does the Bible say be anxious for nothing?

Let's explore together the subject of anxiety and why the Bible says what it does about anxiety. First of all, what is anxiety? Anxiety is a feeling of uncertainty. It involves worry and nervousness.

You know the feeling: The bills aren't going to get paid, your child is going in for surgery, you're applying for that big job today—we've all been there.

When we are anxious, we worry. We are fearful. One of the most frequently used

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version of the Bible.

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Just because we are told by Jesus that we shouldn't be anxious doesn't mean we don't have anxieties. Just like any sin, we have to work hard to uproot it from our lives.

Let's look at scripture. In **Philippians 4:5-7** it says,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,

phrases by Jesus was, "fear not." Fear and worry are the cause of anxiety. What if I don't get that new job? What will I do if I can't pay my bills? What if my child doesn't make it through surgery?

The Sin of Worry

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Just because we are told by Jesus that we shouldn't be anxious doesn't mean we don't have anxieties. Just like any sin, we have to work hard to uproot it from our lives. I love the scripture in **Proverbs 3:5-6**. It says,

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

How often have you heard someone say, "I can't wait?" "I can't wait for school to be over," or "I can't wait until Friday comes," or "I can't wait until our next vacation."

There are so many things that make us anxious. Some of that anxiousness is about imminent things, and some is about

things that are farther away. Matthew 7:31-34 says,

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

I can't tell you how often I have worried about something in life that never happened. Even if it did, I am still here and going strong. All my anxiety did was make me irritable. Why would I want that? Those around me didn't want that.

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It doesn't do us
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Do we have a choice to worry or not to worry? Yes, we do! The problem is that we seek security in the wrong places instead of trusting God. We trust our own abilities and then want God to bail us out when things are going wrong.

Jesus said the pagans worry about what they will eat, or drink or wear. We aren't supposed to worry about those things. It doesn't do us any good. I definitely don't want to be compared to the pagans of the world.

You might ask, then, what should we do when it seems like everything in our

world is falling apart? How did Jesus say we are to handle it? The scripture that we just read says, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Jesus is telling us the solution to the problem of anxiety. Seek Him and His kingdom and His righteousness.

Our worries come from seeking our own way. When we are anxious we are not trusting God. How much time do we spend each day seeking His kingdom and His righteousness? We need to turn our worries over to Him and seek what He has for us.

It is so natural to avoid our problems instead of confronting them. We hope they will go away if we ignore them. Giving our cares over to God isn’t the same thing as ignoring them.

Look at **James 1:2-4** where it says,

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

When we allow God to have His way in us, it will be hard work that He must do through us. That means that even though He does the work we must supply the effort. We have to be patient with Him as He works to make us stronger. God’s Word says it is a testing of our faith. It produces perseverance. What does perseverance yield? It produces completeness and maturity.

Replacing Fear with Hope and Perseverance

We get anxious in life and want to just quit and say, “that’s enough!” We get anxious because we don’t want to suffer. Look at what it says in **Romans 5:1-4**:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

What does it say suffering produces? Perseverance! Why is it we tend to avoid

the very things that will help us? It’s because we see the suffering as a bad thing. But if it produces perseverance, it is a good thing. But suffering takes time to do its work and we often run out of patience.

Proverbs 13:12 explains our feelings very well. It says,

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

When our hopes aren’t gratified right away we have a tendency to want to give up. But look at what perseverance produces. It produces character. And character produces what? It produces hope – *the very thing we need to keep hanging in there.*

It doesn’t do any good to be anxious. It doesn’t speed the process. In the long run, patience will set in if we learn to exercise the spiritual muscle of waiting.

Quitting isn't a solution. Remember that starting fresh sounds good when we are in trouble. It seems to get rid of the problem at hand, but the end result leaves nothing resolved.

So Jesus tells us not to be anxious. That means we learn how to wait while remaining calm. That's what grows our patience and it is patience that gives you the will to persevere.

The more anxiety we have, the more disappointed we are when what we're anxious for doesn't come to pass. That means we are going to have to learn to moderate our desires. If we don't, we will set ourselves up for disappointment which causes anxiety. **Proverbs 12:25** says,

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

Jesus knew that anxiety would cause us to act irrationally. He knew we can't be trusting God if we worry. Jesus wants God to be our first source of resolve when we have problems. Anxiety is a curse to us. It can steal our sleep from us. It creates fear that can lead to other unhealthy situations.

Let me give you an example from my own life. As a businessman, I experienced both the good and the bad of business. I had been very successful in some of my business adventures and not so successful in others.

I had just gone through a very good streak of success. I had extra cash available and got anxious to do something with the money. I decided to purchase a group of apartments. I had a Christian friend that managed real estate apartments for other people. He said he would be willing to manage mine as well.

I went ahead with the purchases and did some renovation to make them more rentable. I bought them for a reasonable price and turned the management over to my friend. I found out that these apartments had a reputation for having undesirable living conditions in them. My renovations didn't seem to make up for the bad reputation.

I battled through the losses for a while, as I was trying to be patient and keep my anxiety at bay. I knew if I could just hang in there things would eventually come my way. Little did I know that one of the town's biggest employers was about to do a plant shutdown.

When I heard the news I was gripped with fear and anxiety. My tenants were made up of most of the employees that lost their jobs. I tried to be optimistic and thought, these people will get jobs somewhere else and I will still be ok. A few days later there was

an announcement saying these employees would be offered jobs in another city. Within weeks my occupancy rate had dropped to about 25%. I knew I could sustain the losses for a while because of other cash flows that I had.

As time passed, however, I became *very* anxious. I wanted things to change now. I didn't want to wait. Because of the low occupancy rate the value of the property had dropped sharply and I would incur deep loses if I tried to sell them. Do you remember the quote from earlier? It says that starting fresh sounds good when we are in trouble. Man, was that ever the case with me. I wanted to start over. I wanted to stop the bleeding. I was letting my flesh dictate my desires and was not willing to let patience have her perfect work in me.

Instead I let irrationality work in me. I just wanted closure. I felt I needed to cut my losses. Well eventually I gave in and sold the properties off for a loss.

Whenever something seems likely to happen, we tend to think it will happen very soon.

have her perfect work in me. I learned a great lesson. Whenever something seems likely to happen, we tend to think it will happen very soon.

I had thought there was a risk of a severe financial setback if I waited much longer. I thought it would come soon. That's what anxiety does to us. It steals our patience. It sets us up for destruction. All the worry in the world won't do us any good. It only exacerbates the problem.

Within a few years the community was facing a housing shortage and I was on the sideline looking in. Anxiety had gotten the better of me. I didn't let patience

Positive Planning

There is a difference between *worry* and *planning*. We have to analyze our situations carefully. When in trouble, we need to remain rational or we risk becoming obsessed with finding resolve on our timetable instead of God's.

My anxiety caused me to act irrationally. How anxious do you think the disciples were when they were in their ministries after Jesus had ascended into heaven? I want you to read this story and then think about how the disciples were acting. In **Acts 16:22-25** it says,

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was

commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Are you kidding me!? Paul and Silas had to be hurting from the severe beating they had undergone. They had shackles on their feet. And what were they doing? They were singing while the other prisoners were listening.

These guys had gotten a grip on their anxiety. They didn't worry about suffering. If suffering is what God wanted in their line of duty, then suffering it would be. And it didn't steal their joy.

Think about this. If we aren't supposed to

be anxious with anything then that means we are to be patient with everything. Anxiety shows a lack of trust. Whether it's a lack of trust of God or others or ourselves it means we don't trust *someone*.

When you get anxious, stop and ask yourself: "Who is it you're not trusting?"

We can anticipate something and be in total control, without any anxiety, because we are patient.

So we know it's wrong to be anxious. But, is it wrong to look forward to something? Is anticipation wrong? If I'm not to be anxious then should I look forward to Fridays or vacations or weddings?

When dealing with anxiety we are to avoid it because it has ill effects in us. It causes us to not trust and creates an impatient

attitude. So let's take a look at anticipation. We can anticipate something and be in total control, without any anxiety, because we are patient.

Fear Not!

Paul anticipated going to heaven. In **2 Corinthians 5:8-9** he said,

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

Paul was willing to be wherever God wanted Him. He preferred to be in heaven but wasn't anxious about it.

Through the years I have taken a lot of vacations with my family. We always looked forward to getting away. If we let

looking forward to getting away become a situation of anxiety, then it is wrong. Paul was content in his present state even though he desired heaven. Sometimes when I was on the road heading somewhere, the kids would say the all-too-famous line, "*Are we there yet?*" Now that's anxiety. It's impatience and it's wrong.

Anxiety can come from an overzealous desire for pleasure as well as a dread of something that is un-pleasurable. When we are fearful we need to force ourselves to give it over to God. We may not feel like it but it is what we need to do. In **Psalms 34:4** it says,

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Fear is a tremendous anxiety builder. Why do you think so many people bail at the

bottom of stock market crashes? They listen to the voice of fear that says you had better get out or you won't have anything left – just another lie of the devil, getting us to lose faith once again.

Fear not! Fear not! Fear not! Jesus was making a very vivid point to us. In essence Jesus was saying, "Trust me. Give me the reigns of your life and I will run things in a way they should be run." He didn't say, "Fear not!" because things are going to get easy. He said "Fear not!" because fear is contrary to faith and it is impossible to please God when we are paralyzed by fear.

We talked earlier about anticipation in regards to anxiety. Anticipation is a looking forward to something we hope for or against. It can be positive anticipation or negative anticipation and it can create anxiety. Left unchecked, anxiety will take away our joy in life.

Addictions can stem from a need for excitement and action. Gambling is one of those anxiety tricks that create addictions in us.

Think about this point very carefully. Some addictions are in search of emotional stimulation, such as gambling. Other addictions stem from the desire to get rid of anxiety, such as overeating, and the use of drugs and alcohol. Can you see why God doesn't want anxiety in our lives?

We tend to seek out things that are exciting. That's so we can be stimulated emotionally. Sports create in us excitement that puts us at the end of our chairs. Excitement is defined as something that is a feeling of great enthusiasm and eagerness. Excitement is also expressed by anticipation. Anticipation is the friend of addiction. When we are stressed it seems great to have some release that we can go

to in order to get rid of our stress. That's not how God intended for things to be.

In **1 Peter 5:6-7** it says,

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you.

It says humble yourselves and in due time He will lift you up. As I've said, we try to

One thing that excites us is when we get recognized by others. This causes us to become people pleasers instead of God pleasers.

stimulate ourselves by finding things that excite us. One thing that excites us is when we get recognized by others. This causes us to become people pleasers instead of God pleasers.

This scripture tells us to humble ourselves. That means we don't try and impress others so we can get the excitement of their approval. When we do that, we can feel proud of ourselves. The Bible, however, tells us God will lift us up in due time.

Jesus said we are to ask for our daily bread. Instead we seek way beyond one day's worth of needs. We seek for enough to retire on. Then we seek for enough to be able to see our kids secured. We are seeking the security that comes from money. In the process God gets left out of the picture. We start to ask ourselves, "Who needs God when we have enough money for the rest of our lives and then some?"

Read what it says in **Luke 12:16-21**
And he told them this parable:

The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”

But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.

So if we are not to be anxious, isn’t it good to work hard so we can have financial

security? Isn’t that one way to get rid of some of the stress and anxiety? The key is in the last statement that says, “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” **So what does it mean to be rich towards God?**

It means we are growing in our walk with Christ. It means we aren’t making money so we can eat drink and be merry, but so we can do more for the kingdom of God. The end result of our storing up money should be so God is glorified, not so we can bask in our own glory and comfort.

Psalm 27:14 says,

Don’t be impatient. Wait for the Lord, and he will come and save you! Be brave, stouthearted, and courageous. Yes, wait and he will help you. (TLB)

So, don't worry about everything going on in the world around you. God knows what our needs are. If we trust in Him, He will direct our paths.

OUR MISSION

At Principles for Living, we seek to help others come to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ. We also want to help Christians grow in their knowledge and faith in their Christian walk. Our teachings include a mixture of secular psychology and Christian practicality.

If this booklet has blessed you in any way, and you want to learn more about our ministry, our faith, or about the transforming love of Jesus Christ, visit us on the web at principlesforliving.com.

REACH OUT TO US



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Bill Zechmann
President & Founder
Principles for Living



Principles for Living

A COMMITMENT TO BIBICAL TEACHING

Bill Zechmann was born in the rural Foster, Nebraska. At the age of eighteen he committed his life to Christ and felt God's call to teach practical Biblical principles. Principles for Living was founded in 2010. His calling was inspired by James 3:1-2:

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. (NASU)

Bill spent decades studying the doctrines of different Christian denominations to help him understand and teach the Bible more effectively. He holds B.A degrees in Biblical Studies and Human Resources Management. Bill professes that his greatest joy

in life comes from helping others find the love of Christ in their lives. The goal of his teachings is to help others find freedom from the clutches of sin.

A MISSIONARY AT HOME AND ABROAD

In 2010, while serving as a missionary in the Philippines, Kenya, and Liberia, Bill ministered to crowds of 5,000 people and has seen hundreds come forward to receive Christ. At home in the United States, Bill conducts personal growth seminars and evangelistic crusades. His teachings are focused on helping the lost find Christ and seeking a positive change in their lives.

STRENGTHENED BY ADVERSITY

Bill's teachings have been molded through many of the experiences he has had throughout his own life. Overcoming adversity became their source of strength. Despite health problems and the loss of their second-born child, Bill and his wife Jane persevered together and grew as Christians. Regardless of the hardships they have had to face, Bill and Jane maintain that their lives continue to be strengthened by Christ's love.

ZECHMANN FAMILY

Bill and Jane have been happily married for more than 30 years. They currently reside in Norfolk, Nebraska.

OTHER BOOKLETS ARE AVAILABLE!

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Can Others Make You

ANGRY?



Principles for Living

Can Others Make You Angry?

Where do we turn when our anger
is out of control?

A hot temper can fracture our relationships,
compound our problems and - worst of all
- it displeases God. But we have the tools to
control our anger in God's Word.

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Remove the Choice of

CHOOSING



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Temptation is something we
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because you're relying on your own
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Are anxiety and fear controlling your life?



We know that the Bible tells us that nobody by worrying can add a single hour to his or her life. So why do our crippling anxieties and fears still rule us? Inside, you'll discover:

- **Why the only thing that can ease our anxieties is hope in God.**
- **How to replace fear with perserverance.**
- **The difference betweeen useless worry and positive planning.**



Principles for Living
with Bill Zechmann

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