



UPPER ROOM
FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Growth & Transformation

2 Peter 3:18 & 2 Corinthians 3:18

Teaching Letter

February 2021

Be CALM—Trust in God

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

— *Philippians 1:6*

Introduction

By God's grace, we stepped into 2021. I suspect that for most of you, it is not what you expected. We thought that we had closed the door on 2020 and all of its problems. Not so. It appears that some of its shadows are sneaking into the New Year. Still there is a lot of the unknown as we move forward. All of these and uncertainties about the future are acting as an emotional amplifier, causing anxiety to reach epidemic levels. Still, despite the negative aspects we are surrounded with, we can have confidence in God. He is not surprised by any of these things. As Ralph Abernathy said: "I don't know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future."

Anxiety can twist us in emotional pretzels

Christians face anxiety as well, but this doesn't mean that we are emotionally immature, or are not-good-enough-Christians. This doesn't imply that our parents didn't do a good job raising us. This simply means that we are just human beings living in a fallen world, marred by sin, full of all sorts of problems, sickness, pain, and suffering. "In this world you will have tribulation," Jesus said: "but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Many times we forget the "but" and expose ourselves

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

— *Philippians 4:8*



Action Items:

- Grow in God's **GRACE**
- Grow in the **KNOWLEDGE** of Christ
- Grow in the **LOVE** of the Father

to fear, worry, and anxiety.

In a message called, *Be Anxious for Nothing*, delivered by Max Lucado to Gateway Church in Texas, he said: "Anxiety can twist us in emotional pretzels." What a way to describe this ugly mental/emotional disorder that affects the world more than ever.

I appreciate the fact that Max Lucado explained that in some cases, people need professional help, therapy, a counselor, a physician, and some medication. Lucado said: "If that is the case, you are NOT a second-class citizen." He also asserts that one sermon, one book, one devotion, or one prayer are not sufficient to address the life problems we all face, but all of us can benefit from a healthy dose of Philippians 4:4-8. Using his poetic style, Lucado suggested that we can move from chaos to calm. Using the C A L M acrostic, and based on the wisdom found in Philippians 4, we can follow these simple steps.

C—Celebrate God goodness

A—Ask God for help

L—Leave your problems with God

M—Meditate on good things

C—Celebrate God goodness

In his epistle to the Philippians, before telling them to pray, Paul said: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). This is not a suggestion, it is an exhortation. It requires our decision to rejoice in God. One simple exercise that is very helpful is to count God's blessings. Name them one by one and make a list of things that God has already done for you, such as prayers He has answered and blessings He has provided. (If you are curious to see my list, feel free to read my blog post titled, *Celebrating God's Goodness*.)

The Psalmist declares:

I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely,
I will remember Your wonders of old. I will
meditate on all Your work and muse on Your
deeds. (Psalm 77:11-12)

In the process of writing down the list, our focus is redirected from the problems, real or imaginary, to facing God's goodness and loving-kindness. Instead of feeling sorry for ourselves—**victims**, we start feeling grateful—**victors**. We turn towards God with thankfulness. We sing with the Psalmist: "Bless the

LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits" (Psalm 103:1). Anxiety and gratitude cannot coexist. Slowly but surely, we learn to conquer anxiety with the power of gratitude.

I rejoice every time science catches up with the Bible. In an article called: "Gratitude is good medicine. Practicing gratitude boosts emotional and physical well-being," it was reported that: "A growing body of research is confirming that an ounce of gratitude is worth a pound of cure." And, according to Robert A. Emmons, professor of psychology at UC Davis: "The practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person's life. Gratitude is good medicine. For more than two thousand years, the Bible has been teaching us this truth: "All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15). Just a little bit of adjustment in our attitude makes a huge difference. All of this depends on what we focus on: **our problems or our God**.

I believe that all people have at least one issue that makes the top of their list of worries. That aspect alone, at times, could spike anxiety to new heights. For me it is worrying about finances. What is that issue for you? (To understand my background read my blog titled: *Celebrating God's Goodness*.)

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To read this amazing teaching entirely please go to urfm.org and look for the Blog post "Be CALM—Trust in God." After a careful reading of the entire Blog please address the questions below.

Discussion Questions

- What did you like the most from this teaching letter? Share it with your Life Group or a friend.
- What new aspect did you learn from this teaching letter? Which parts spoke the most to you?
- Do you feel anxious and would like to process your thoughts and feeling with a trusted spiritual mentor? Feel free to reach out to me and schedule a meeting.

With Love in Christ's Service,

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Life Coach/Author/Spiritual Mentor

PS: I am constantly looking for believers who desire to accelerate their spiritual growth.

For the endnotes please go to <https://urfm.org/blog>.
