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The Challenge of Being Anxious

Two years into King Saul's reign he became anxious about the Philistines gathering around him and Samuel's delay in coming to offer the sacrifice. His fear and anxiety compelled him to offering the burn offering himself. (1 Samuel 13:12) Saul had sinned and God now planned to take his kingdom away. It is very easy to sin when we become anxious.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. " and yet we worry.

Paul instructs us to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;" Philippians 4:6 and yet we are anxious.

It can be rather challenging not to worry. During this world wide pandemic it is very easy to worry about catching the virus, loosing your job, running out of food and household items. Anxiety and worry are known to cause health issues and yet we worry.

The two passages above provide the key to handling our worries and anxieties. In Matthew 6:25-32 it is trusting in God to do His promised part. God cannot lie and He has promised to provide for His children. Our part is to trust in Him and seek His kingdom first.

In Philippians 4:6 the key to fear and anxiety is pray to God and let Him know what we need and to do so with thankfulness.

Our Father in heaven is a loving Father who does not seek our harm but our good.

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:9-13

So the key to controlling our anxieties is to have deep and abiding trust in our Father in heaven who always cares.

STACY

To Be Faithful

~by Steven Matthews

"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" — Revelation 2:10

What exactly does "be faithful" mean? The Greek word for "faithful" is *pistos* — a person who shows themselves faithful in the transaction of business or execution of commands; can be relied on. When I think of that definition, I immediately think of God. Every day, God is good and faithful to us. Every day, we have God's unfailing love. He can be trusted.

So, how can I be faithful and remain faithful to God? It must be of genuine concern. It's a question those contemplating obedience ask, and even after obedience, the question is still asked. We recognize that the decision to become a Christian is the single most important decision a person can make. But obeying the gospel is only the beginning of a lifelong commitment to God; a launching pad, not a landing pad. When we put God first in our lives, every aspect of our lives will fit in with the goal of obtaining a crown of life when this life is over.

Here are five questions to consider:

What is the most important thing in your life?

If you say God, that's the right answer. But do your actions confirm what you say? Do the two match (Matthew 7:20)?

What do you think about?

What occupies your mind most (Colossians 3:2)? When activities and obligations are not pressing in your life, where do your thoughts gravitate to easily? Spiritual things, or do you have to force yourself to think about God's Word?

What gives when you face conflicting priorities?

Conflicts are going to happen. What makes the cut when there's a conflict in scheduling? Life is a series of decisions and trade-offs. We want to believe we can do it all, but we can't. We make time for things that are really important to us (Ephesians 5:15-16).

Where would others say your priorities lie?

We don't live life in a vacuum or in a bubble. We all have a circle of influence (Matthew 5:13-16). Other people give us real insight as to where our priorities lie.

Is there something in your life that keeps you from following Jesus completely?

Don't walk away sorrowful like the rich young ruler did (Matthew 19:22). Heaven will be worth any sacrifice we make along the way, I guarantee it.. Trust me, you will never be at peace with God, or yourself, until you do.

You Can Start Your Own Church

- by Ken Cooper

Yes, you can start your own church if you want to. Many have never thought of doing such a thing and yet others have done this very thing. Why? Because the church we read about in the Bible did not suit them for one reason or another, therefore they started their own. Yes, if others started their own churches, you can too.

(1) You have as much authority to start a church as King Henry VIII had to start the Church of England (cf. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23,27; Acts 20:28).

(2) You can also call it what you want. After all, you have as much authority as any other man. Call it the church of the devil if you want to; men say names are not important anyway (cf. Romans 16:16; Acts 4:12).

(3) You can have hamburgers and Pepsi (or steak and coffee, it that's your taste) on the Lord's Table. After all you have as much authority to change the elements as others have for changing the time to monthly or quarterly observance (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7).

(4) Since it is your church, you may determine the terms of membership as you see fit. Men for some time, have been changing what the Bible says about the forgiveness of sins and becoming members of the Lord's church (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 3:19; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38, 47).

(5) You can do all of these things because you are the head of your church, much like the conferences, conventions, and synods which make up the legislative bodies in denominationalism (cf. Colossians 1:18; Matthew 16:18).

Yes, you can start your own church, call it what you want to, have your kind of worship, determine the terms of

membership and the kind of organization it will have. But, you must also accept the consequences. We know that such a church is nothing like the church which we read about in the New Testament, and it would be preposterous to try to prove that it is. Since it is your church, it could not hope to have the same reward which the New Testament church has (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:5; 2Timothy 2:10). We know these things...or do we?