

**A. Introduction:** *Fear and Anxiety*

**B. Scripture Reading:** *Philippians 4:6-13*

**C. Question:** Did Paul really say, “*Be anxious for nothing!?*”

**D. Basic Principles for Peace**

**1. Pray about everything**

*<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

**2. Cling to gratitude**

*“...with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Phil 4:6).*

*“...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Phil. 4:8).*

**3. Practice godliness with contentment**

*“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:9).*

*“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances... I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:11,13).*

#### **E. Our Aim:** Be at home in Christ!

“Our aim—our *only* aim—is to be at home in Christ. He’s not a roadside park or hotel room. He’s our permanent mailing address. Christ is our home. He’s our place of refuge and security. We’re comfortable in his presence, free to be our authentic selves. We know our way around in him. We know his heart and his ways. We rest in him, find our nourishment in him. His roof of grace protects us from storms of guilt. His walls of providence secure us from destructive winds. His fireplace warms us during the lonely winters of life. We linger in the abode of Christ and never leave.”  
– Max Lucado

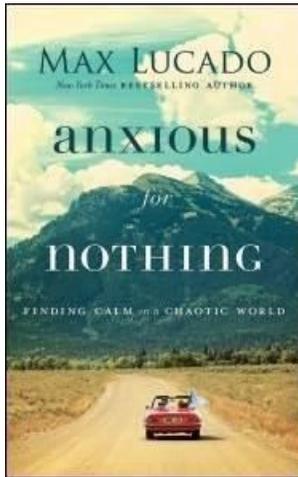
**In [Philippians 4:6](#), the apostle Paul wrote “be anxious for nothing.” Isn’t that kind of extreme?**

**Max Lucado:** Right! “Be anxious for less” would have been a sufficient challenge. Or “Be anxious only on Thursdays.” Or “Be anxious only in seasons of severe affliction.” But Paul doesn’t seem to offer any leeway here. Be anxious for *nothing*. Nada. Zilch. Zero. Is this what he meant? Not exactly. He wrote the phrase in the present active tense, which implies an ongoing state. It’s the life of perpetual anxiety that Paul wanted to address. The *Lucado Revised Translation* reads, “Don’t let anything in life leave you perpetually breathless and in angst.”

The presence of anxiety is unavoidable, but the prison of anxiety is optional. Anxiety is not a sin; it’s an emotion. (So don’t be anxious about feeling anxious.)

Anxiety can, however, *lead* to sinful behavior. When we numb our fears with six-packs or food binges, when we spew anger like Krakatau, when we peddle our fears to anyone who will buy them, we're sinning.

**Do Christians struggle with the myth that they shouldn't ever feel worried or experience anxiety?**



**Max Lucado:** Yes! We've been taught that the Christian life is a life of peace, and when we don't have peace, we assume the problem lies within us. Not only do we feel anxious, but we also feel guilty about our anxiety! The result is a downward spiral of worry, guilt, worry, guilt.

You long to be "anxious for nothing." You long for the fruit of the Spirit. But how do you bear this fruit? Try harder? No, hang tighter. Our assignment is not *fruitfulness* but [faithfulness](#). The secret to fruit bearing and anxiety-free living is *less* about doing and *more* about abiding.

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**Max Lucado:** Paul's answer to that question is profound and concise. "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:7](#)). As we do our part (rejoice in the Lord, pursue a

gentle spirit, pray about everything, and cling to gratitude), God does his part. He bestows upon us the peace of God. Note, this is not a peace *from* God. Our Father gives us the very peace *of* God. He downloads the tranquility of the throne room into our world, resulting in an inexplicable calm. We should be worried, but we aren't. We should be upset, but we're comforted. The peace of God transcends all logic, scheming, and efforts to explain it.