

MANAGING STRESS ANXIETY (#1)

Request: “Could you explain how to manage stress anxiety? I seem to get filled with anxiety in all stressful situations of my life.”

There seemed to be a similar problem within the Philippian congregation (relationship conflict).

It was to this congregation that Paul uttered the most quoted words regarding stress anxiety – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made to God.” (Phil.4:6)

In our lesson text, Paul gave six imperatives that we can use to address the problem of Stress Anxiety.

Phil.4:1	Stand firm (steko / p.a.impv.2pl) – in the Lord
Phil.4:2-3	Help (sullambano / p.a.impv.2pl) – these women (Gal.6:1-2)
Phil.4:4-5	Rejoice in the Lord always (chairo / p.a.impv.2pl / 2x) – forbearing spirit be known to all
Phil.4:6-7	Be anxious for nothing (merimnao / p.a.impv.2pl / meden) Pray with thanksgiving and the peace of God shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus
Phil.4:8	Let your mind dwell on these things (Logizomai / p.a.impv.2pl) Six excellent things worthy of praise
Phil.4:9	Practice these things (prasso / p.a.impv.2pl) – and the God of peace shall be with you.

This lesson will study four aspects of a Christian managing Stress Anxiety.
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1. The Greek word that is used in our lesson text for anxiety is merimnao. It literally means to be drawn in different directions. (Stress Anxiety).

Merimnao can be used both positively (eustress) and negatively (distress and hyper stress).

It can be used positively:

(1 Cor.12:25) “That there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same **care (no stressful anxiety)** for one another.”

(Phil.2:20) “For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned **for your welfare.**”

It can be used negatively:

(Matt.13:22) (thorny ground) “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and **the worry (stressful anxiety)** of the world, and deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

(Phil.4:6-7) (our lesson text) “Be anxious (p.a.impv.2pl) for meden (not one thing).”

2. Stress anxiety is a Mental Attitude Sin (MAS).

As a MAS, anxiety means being pulled in a different direction from walking by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit to walking by means of the old sin-nature (OSN) (Gal.5:16-17).

(Luke 21:34) “Be on guard that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap.”

(James 1:14-15) “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

3. Stress anxiety becomes a problem of life when it is operating from OMCD (old man cosmos diabolicus).

(1 Pet.5:7-8) “Casting all your **anxiety** upon Him, **because He cares** for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

(Matt.6:24-25) “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?”

Stress anxiety is often associated with a cluster of MAS of OMCD.

4. It is not about removing the problem but removing the stress anxiety by changing one’s belief attached to OMCD (Eph.4:22-24; Rom.12:2; 2 Cor.5:17; Prov.15:13, 15).

This can be illustrated in Luke 10:38-42 by Martha.

Martha’s stress anxiety was part of a psychological defense mechanism to avoid dealing with the real problem of OMCD. She is being distracted and drawn in a different direction.

It is Martha pattern to blame and excuse away her stress anxiety OMCD behavior – “Anxiety in the heart of man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.” (Prov.12:25)

(Luke 10:41-42) “But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; But only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

To change your coping mechanism, you must change OMCD to NMDV thinking.

(Phil.4:11-13; 1 Thess.3:2-3; Matt.14:22-33) [fear, little faith and doubt] (Matt.14:26, 31) [breakdown and meltdown].

This is NMDV converting crisis stress anxiety (distress and hyper stress) into good stress (eustress) (2 Cor.12:9-10; Phil.4:7; Rom.12:18).