

Overcoming Worry

By Joe R Wheeler

Introduction-Worry is one of the banes of human existence. It afflicts persons from all walks of life. Rich men worry about loosing their earthly possessions. Poor men worry about acquiring them. Worry is the stepping stone to some of the most terrible human conditions in which to live. Severe depression is frequently a result of worry. Suicide has been the final solution for many worriers. Most however, simply suffer with unresolved anxiety as a result of worrying.

Jesus came in the flesh to give us freedom from sin. One of the evils he spoke of in His great Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5,6,7, was "taking thought for". What He meant by this was to be concerned with unnecessary things. We should trust in God to provide for our needs. The heart and mind need not be occupied with the things that are under God's control.

Matthew 6:25-34 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

I. Recognizing the Attributes of Worry: First of all, worrying is something that we can control with God's help. An attitude of faith and trust allows the seed of worry no place to take root and grow. Worry actually is comprised of several elements which together create the whole.

A. It is Inconsistent---We all know about this one. Unshaky ground is no place in which to build. If we are inconsistent in our faith in God, we will be always fearful of His providence. We are told in James 1:5-8 that we must have faith when we ask God to help us. If we waiver in that faith we are "double minded". This is what being inconsistent really is: double mindedness. It is being unstable and wavering instead of steady and firm. Lacking confidence that God will do what He has promised. Worry is partly built from Inconsistent Faith!

Matthew 6:25 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

B. It is Irrational--- We who are believers in God...Must Believe! If worry is partly built on being "double minded", then it is also built with irrationality as well. We can see through scripture how God has done what He promised to do from the beginning. He said He will take care of us as surely as He takes care of all of the rest of His creatures. It is not irrational thought that leads us to begin to doubt God. Unbelief leads to irrational thought.

Matthew 6:26 *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

Matthew 10:29-31 *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the*

ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:6-7 *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

C.It is Ineffective--- We all have experience with this attribute. When has worry ever helped anyone solve anything? Jesus made this simple to understand...worry adds nothing to us, it only detracts. Frustration with our life cannot be solved by worry. It is truly ineffective because it is the wrong frame of mind in which to solve our difficulties.

Matthew 6:27 *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

D.It is Illogical--- Logic is being able to see things for what they are. To accept our lot in life. God has control. Sometimes we find our situation's not to our liking. Refusal to accept what God has given us leads to anger, resentment, and a sense of rebellion. We get upset and turn away from God if we continue in this frame of mind. Worry is partly illogical because we fret over things that are completely out of our hands, thinking that somehow we can find a way to change them.

Matthew 6:28-30 *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

E.It is Irreligious--- This attribute is basically unbelief as well. God knows what we need before we ask. More importantly, He knows our true needs. Parents understand this better than some, they routinely have to say no to their children when they ask for things that would actually be harmful to them. God gives us what is best for us, not necessarily what we may ask for. Worry is irreligious because it is seeking after what is not God's will for us to have.

Matthew 6:31-32 *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

F.It is Temptation--- We know from James 1:12-15, that we are tempted by our own desires, or in this case weaknesses. To dwell means to abide. We must not dwell on those things that are harmful to our faith. We must not undermine what God is doing for us. Think of worry as planting a seed. It starts out small but over time grows if we nurture it. Worry is a temptation in the beginning but quickly takes root and develops. It grows stronger each time we "water it" by our thoughts, and eventually it becomes fully developed. Now it is very prominent in our life...it is very difficult to remove once it is firmly rooted. At the point of it being only a temptation is the proper time to deal with it. Satan may whisper in our ear, but God speaks loudly to us if we will go to His Word, and pray with faith. But if we have been afflicted by it, and we have let it gain a foothold what can we do...

II. How Can We Defeat Worry?

A.Godly Priorities In Life--- Jesus tells us what we need to put first in our life. We can't serve two masters. Trying to have everything the world has to offer and being a Christian at the same time simply doesn't work. Although there are many that think they have found a way to achieve both, they are believing a lie. If the world really matters to you, then you are not serving God.

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

B. Godly Outlook On Life--- To leave off worrying and trust in God takes commitment. We must commit to not thinking about earthly matters and focus on God. Remember in Matthew 14:28-31 that Peter walked on the water...but only as long as he focused on Jesus and not the waves.

Matthew 6:34 *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

1.Letting God Take Care Of Tomorrow-- Today is all we have. God has promised to give us the strength we need for today, and not to worry about tomorrow.

Deuteronomy 33:25b...*and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*

2.Letting God Take Care Of The Past-- The past is put away from us. Needless worry about things that have passed is foolish and harmful.

a. Don't dwell on yesterday's sins- God has forgiven us for our sin and we are washed white as snow. There is no need for us to try to pay for the past...Jesus already paid it all!

Psalms 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

Micah 7:19 *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

b. Don't dwell on yesterday's successes- What we **had** no longer matters. Life goes on and we must progress. Even though we may have many happy memories of happier times, we need to remember that the best is ahead of us. Lot's wife is an example of looking back (Genesis 19:26).

Ecclesiastes 7: 8, 10 *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. 10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*

Philippians 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

c. Don't dwell on yesterday's sorrows- God's comfort is thwarted by dwelling in a state of mourning. We all have to lose loved ones along the way, that is a painful part of life we all share...but there is a time to mourn and when the time is past we must move on.

Psalms 23:4 *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Additional Verses:

Psalms 50:15 *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

Psalms 55:22 *Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with*

thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Conclusion: Worry is a problem for which there is a cure! We have to overcome worry through prayer and determination. God will help us but we must ask in faith. Do Not Be Double Minded!!