

"GOD I'M WORRIED"

Worry has been defined as anxiety - a state of being uneasy or apprehensive about what may happen. The definition suggests a mental distress of agitation over some problem. Uneasiness of mind results from facing responsibilities or problems we feel incapable of handling. I've heard it said, "Worry is the interest paid by those who borrow trouble."

In the New Testament, "Worry" (Merimna) means "to divide." which comes from the Greek verb MERIZO. People who worry are "divided" - mentally torn apart

Just reading the newspapers exposes us to a multitude of problems capable of producing worry. Sometimes we feel we're sitting on a pile of gunpowder while world leaders play with matches.

Inflation is another problem to worry about. While we watch our money buy less and less, we wonder how to feed and clothe our families on a shrinking income.

Also, ecologists are giving more publicity to the energy crisis, and the word "rationing" is becoming a live option. For years we have lived with the feeling there was no bottom in the bucket of our natural resources; but now, faced with the possibility of shortages and rationing, anxiety begins to chip away at our peace of mind.

And in the midst of big crises are little daily crises: The garbage disposal breaks down; an important exam tomorrow; taxes due next week; our child breaks an arm; what to serve to dinner guests, what would be the "right thing" to wear to the party. When we add our personal crises to the national and international problems, we see why people are weighed down with worry.

Being a Christian doesn't provide immunity from the threat of worry. God doesn't provide a super anti-worry vaccine for the Christian. Joe Christian faces the same worry-producing problems that plague everyone else.

Once we allow pressures to worry us, they will snowball - the more we worry, the more we'll find to worry about. "I have lived a long life and seen lots of trouble, but most of it didn't happen."

Jesus placed His finger squarely on the main worries of life (food and clothing), "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: 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? (Matt. 6:25). (Anxious" is the same Greek word MERIMNA translated "worry". In this sense, worry and anxiety are synonymous.)

Why do we worry? We worry because we fail to believe God. Jesus illustrated the point vividly by turning to nature:

"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin.

Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these." (Matt. 6:26,28-29)

Since God feeds the birds of the air and clothes the flowers of the field, we can rest assured He will meet our needs also, for we are worth more than the birds and flowers. Jesus said that the Father knows what we need. "----- for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these thing." (Matt. 6:32)

Since God knows our needs, failure to trust Him to meet our basic needs is lack of faith.

"But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?" (Matt. 6:30)

Failure to believe God, is unbecoming to the Christian. Unbelievers don't know how to trust God for their "daily bread," so the worry. Jesus said, "for all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek." Matt. 6:32) But God is not responsible for meeting the needs of the unbeliever (as He is for the believer.)

Christians have abundant promises from God that He will meet their daily needs. "My God shall supply all your needs ----- (Philippians 4:19) This is a promise! Worry about any need is a sin because it's a True to believe God s promises. Nature shows how God takes care of the birds and flowers. We may see birds working, but we'll never see them worrying:

But you object, "if you knew the problems I face, you wouldn't call worry a sin. ".ts not necessary to know your individual problems because God has promised to take care and supply all our needs. God has also promised to take better care of us than the birds, why worry?

Worry will create many problems and won't accomplish a single constructive thing!. It will only make bad matters worse.

What does anxiety do? It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; but empties today of its strength. It does not make you escape evil it makes you unfit to cope with it if it comes.

You can't solve problem by worrying. Worry will not move you one inch in the direction of the solution. Jesus said, "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life span?" (Matt. 6:27) When you worry, the problem seems to grow larger and larger by the moment. With just a little effort, worry can build your problem into a gigantic impossible situation.

Worry will create emotional problems making you tense, nervous jumpy, withdrawn. It will impair your emotional ability to make decisions and make you progressively incapable of

dealing with life. Every decision you face will become more and more difficult as you doubt your ability to make right decisions.

Worry will cause physical problems and chop years from your life expectancy. People who don't know how to fight worry die young.

It will also add misery to the years you do live. Eighty percent of the stomach disorders that come to us are not organic, but functional. Wrong mental and spiritual attitudes throw functional disturbances into digestion. Most of our ills are caused by worry and fear, and it is my experience that faith is more important than food in the cure of stomach ulcers.

Worry will also produce spiritual problems for the Christian. Anytime you do what God has forbidden, spiritual problems will arise, and since worry is forbidden, the person who worries can expect problems.

Worry will neutralize the effect of the Word of God in your life. In the parable of the soils, Jesus was talking about the productivity of the Word in lives. He underscored at worry will do when He said, "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the Word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Matt 13"22)

You can read the Word, but if you are filled with worry, it will be unfruitful in your life. This explains in part why *some never* get to first base in their Christian life although exposed to the Word for years. They allow worry to neutralize the Word making it impossible to germinate and produce fruit.

Worry causes an imbalance in spiritual priorities. When Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha, Mary was *content* to sit quietly listening while her sister "fussed about the kitchen" getting dinner ready. Luke 10:40 says "But Martha was distracted with all her preparation ----."

In distress - Martha came to Jesus and complained that while she was working her fingers to the bone, Mary sat there doing nothing! "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

Jesus answered with tender reproof, "----Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things: but only few things are necessary, really only one: for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42). A modern paraphrase might read, "Martha, Martha, you're worried about putting on a' big dinner when a sandwich would be fine. Mary has her priorities right. It's more important to hear the Word."

Worry will cause us to lose sight of the imminent return of the Lord, and allowing our minds to become enmeshed with daily cares and problems negates the urgency to be prepared His coming. Jesus said, "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness, and worries of life, and so that day comes on you suddenly like a trap." (Luke 21:34.)

Most of us know worry paves the road to misery; But knowledge without a remedy only intensifies that misery. Is there any way we can combat the problem of worry? If you have ever worried, God has good news for you; He has made it possible for you to stop worrying. Though God does not promise to remove the pressures that produce worry, He does make it possible for us to face the pressures of life with inner peace.

God does not suggest that we follow His way to cure worry--He commands it! God's cure for worry involves three things:

First: Stop worrying and start trusting. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious then, saying what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." (Matt. 6:31-32)

The command to stop worrying is based on the Father's care. God takes care of the birds and flowers (and we are more precious in His sight), therefore, He commands us to stop worrying about our daily needs.

We are also to start trusting God to meet our needs, we have His written guarantee that He will meet all our needs. Jesus said quit worrying about things and "----- seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and these things (physical necessities) shall be added to you." (Matt. 6:33) God has promised (in writing!) to meet our needs; so start trusting Him. Let Him be God; stop usurping His place as provider.

I have a health *insurance* policy which carefully details everything that is covered should I become ill. If *anything* is not covered, it says so. Once I know what the policy covers, I need no longer worry about the medical cost in that area. Likewise, the Bible contains a statement of all God has promised us. Since He has given us His "policy", we should trust Him to provide the promised benefits.

By contemporary standards my family was poor when I was growing up. No matter how hard things got, when we the children needed something, shoes, lunch money, etc. my parents took care of my needs. Conversely, God our Father, has promised to take care of all our needs; we have no need to worry.

Second: Stop straining and turn loose. Does that sound hard to do? If it does, it's because we think God is not interested in solving our problems. Did God care enough to take care of our sin problem on the cross? He did! then doesn't it stand to reason if He was interested enough to give us life, He is interested in helping us with the problems of life?

"Casting all your anxiety upon Him because he cares for you" (I Peter 5:7) God does care for us. " God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) The cross is irrefutable proof that He cares and wants to bear our burdens.

What does "casting all our anxiety upon Him" mean? It means we are to give Him all our problems by simply letting go of them. He doesn't tell us to throw our cares on Him as the

English seems to convey. The Greek word means to hand them to Him. If we had to throw them His way, it would imply He is distant, but God is closer to us than hands and feet.

Assume you were carrying a hundred pound weight on your shoulders. If I told you to throw it fifty feet, you would say, "That's impossible", I agree. But If I told you to quit straining and let it fall to the ground, it would be easy.

Little story to share with you. Once a woman carried a huge bundle of sticks on her back as she walked down the road. A man in a truck stopped and offered her a ride. Gratefully she accepted and climbed in the back of the truck to join several other passengers. As the truck drove down the road, the woman kept the bundle of sticks on her back. When one of the passengers suggested she lay the bundle down, the old woman replied, "Oh no, I couldn't do that. It's enough that the man is carrying me. I wouldn't ask him to carry my bundle too."

I Peter 5:7 is telling us to quit straining with our burdens, turn them loose and let them fall on Christ. that thought has been captured in a phrase of a song I remember, "Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there." We are invited to give our worries to the Lord so He can carry them for us. It's His responsibility, not ours.

Third: Stop the panic and start praying.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

We're not to let anything throw us into a panic. "Be anxious for nothing" can be translated "Don't worry about anything." Look at that again -- It's a command, not a request. It's an important command that touches the grass root problems of life.

What happens when an emergency situation arises? The first reaction is to panic! Common sense tells us panic is not the correct reaction. Nevertheless, we hit the "Panic button." The Word tells us it's wrong reaction, because panic is uncontrolled worry. Even though panic is a natural response, it's the wrong, response.

"Okay, I've got it. Don't panic. but what do I do now?"

Paul continues by telling us to pray about the problem. "----but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." What are we doing when we pray about it? We are telling God our problems and inviting His concern and aid on our behalf. Our prayer is to be with thanksgiving --thanking God for two things: First that we have the problem which forces us to recognize our dependence upon Him; Second, that we can come to" Him with our problems.

Will that work? Of course it will. Paul goes on to tell us that when we commit the problem to God in prayer, our mental anguish will cease because His incomprehensible peace shall stand watch over our troubled hearts. Worry comes when there is mental anguish and is dispelled when

God's peace floods our very souls. Once we have committed our need to God. His peace stand military guard duty over our spirit and is the antidote to worry.

During some real trouble times of much pressure back in the late 60's my wife and I were under, the doctor said I had but a short time live. So brave old me" put everything in order to see that she and the children were taken care of. I came home Saturday morning to prepare to die, I had been bleeding all week long, pretty badly. So I got in bed to get the job over with, with little fan fare. (How about that for vanity?) You see my trust was not in God, but in the doctor who told me this and I accepted it without question. BUT my wonderful wife would not give up. She finally got me to time hospital after trying to get me help elsewhere. There is no doubt she and I had much concern (or worry). She really couldn't believe it was happening to us, she felt I would go on forever. She was so worried about me as our sons were also. My worry (yes, my worry) was who would take care of them? I guess I thought I was the only one who could do that job. Yes, I forgot for a moment, then I submitted my very concern to our Father. I placed this problem (worry) on His shoulders and just as soon as I committed this to Him in a pure heart, He turned my life around and wiped my tears of pain away.

His peace came over me, my whole being became at peace within me. The doctor told me he was losing me, I thanked him for his efforts and help. He began to tell me that they did all they could for me that he was sorry, so sorry. I told him "please don't feel bad I thank you for caring, God bless you." I continued to pray and I felt that I heard in my heart and mind these words, "Take the fear (worry) from your heart for I am with you, you will not die this night, be at - peace."

I told the doctors this laying right there in the operating room, he smiled, but didn't believe me. (Later he told me this). From that moment and till now I have *known* a peace beyond all understanding. I have never worried again. I have learned to place my troubles in His hands and He has never but never failed to care, to be there when I needed Him. I now live with n̄that rest, of that wonderful peace He gives so freely to us. I trust Him to keep His promise for "I know He loves me, and I have grown to love Him so very much. My life is complete in Him.

I have seen these doctors over the last several years from time to time. One said to me when we met, "See you are still living, I wouldn't have believed it, but I also see something else, I saw your eyes, your face changed from pain to a look of peace before my eyes, now I see even a much more refined look about your eyes, your face. You have really learned what its all about haven't you? You have learned the secret of peace within yourself! Not many men come to such a completeness. Your God and you have done the impossible. And I have learned there is something greater than these hands of mine as well as the knowledge I have, thanks." he said to me and I thank God I told him.

I share these thoughts and His word with you, this precious promise from Him, from His Word, He loves you.

When you and I pray and commit our problems to our Father with our Lord's help you'll see as I have, peace will come to your heart and mind. Its a wonderful peace never known to mankind, please don't pass it up.

We all face problems that are apt to produce worry. Unless we deal with worry, it will cause serious problems. But God makes it possible for us to move off the toll way of worry.

We are commanded to, won't you please try.

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