

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, December 12, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

## VICTORY IN JESUS OVER ENEMIES THAT DEFEAT US

“An Enemy That Shows on Your Face”

*1 John 5:4-5, Genesis 2-3, Matthew 6:25-34, Psalm 37*

*“<sup>4</sup>For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” -1 John 5:4-5*

The song, “Victory in Jesus” written by Eugene Bartlett, a prolific hymn writer, having composed several hundred hymns. Bartlett was born in Christmas Eve in 1885. He dedicated his life to Jesus Christ at an early age. He is considered by many to be the founding father of Southern Gospel Music, and he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1979. Throughout his 56 years of life, he composed more than 800 hymns and gospel songs. He was the founder of the Hartford Music Company and Music Institute. The school attracted many talented artist and became known for publishing great Christian songs and hymnbooks, many of which he wrote himself. He gave many very famous hymn writers their first opportunities to publish their music. Among them was Alfred E. Brumley who wrote “I’ll Fly Away” and “Turn your Radio On.”

Bartlett had a massive stroke that ended his career and he became confined to one room in 1939, unable to communicate. Dying, he spent almost a month writing his very last song, when most of his hymns were written in just a few simple minutes. Although broken in health, and unable to speak, he wanted to demonstrate that his great faith in Jesus Christ had not cracked under suffering and his great victory over doubt and despair. That last hymn was “Victory in Jesus.” Bartlett died in 1941,

### VICTORY IN JESUS

*By E.M. Bartlett (Hymn #426)*

I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory  
How He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me  
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning  
Then I repented of my sins, and won the victory

I heard about His healing, of His cleansing pow'r revealing  
How He made the lame to walk again, and caused the blind to see  
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"  
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory  
I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory

And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea  
 About the angels singing, and the old redemption story  
 And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory

(Chorus) O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever  
 He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood  
 He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him  
 He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood

Christians are overcomers and truly are to live victorious Christian lives every day, but let's be honest, there are many enemies along that way that daily steal our victory and sometimes defeat us. We know the saying we may win the war, yet lose the battle. We ultimately know that we win and will be victorious in the end, but it's the daily battles that defeat us and keep us from living the victorious and abundant life that Christ came to give us daily. This study is about finding victory in Jesus over those enemies that so often defeat us. They can be numerous and varied. They can make an insidious assault on our lives as believers, stealing our joy, dashing our hopes, creating disillusionment and despair in our lives, and keeping us from the abundant life that Jesus desires for us.

We started off in this study looking at the enemy of "fear" and its paralyzing effect on our lives as believers. You may remember that we read a quote from the famous American essayist, lecturer and poet, **Ralph Waldo Emerson** who said, **"Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world."** We talked about what the Bible has to say about fear and more particularly about overcoming our fears in order that our faith can flourish and grow. Then we turned our attention to another enemy the enemy of "doubt." Remember the great preacher, **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** said about doubt, **"Doubt discovers difficulties which it never solves; it creates hesitancy, despondency, despair. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace. "Believe!" is the word which speaks life into a man, but doubt nails down his coffin."** Doubt defeats and disillusions the lives of many professing believer and keep them from enjoying the full benefits of their faith and the victorious Christian life that Christ died to give them. So we've talked about how to defeat and overcome fear and doubt in our lives as believers in order that we might be able to live victorious Christian lives and not be held captive by these deadly enemies that can often plague our lives even as believers.

Then we talked, last week about how fear and doubt really aren't your worst enemies... not really. Those two things, fear and doubt, can defeat us as believers and take a terrible toll on our spiritual and even physical life, yet then may in fact, actually be alerting us to something deeper going on with us... warning signs of a greater enemy at work within. Your worst enemy is named "Self," and "Self" can become the greatest enemy that a believer will face. We talked about how the enemy of self, is a powerful, controlling enemy, that blinds us, hardens us, and holds us captive... this enemy clouds our judgment and even deceives us, and we talked about how to defeat the enemy of self. Now, in this we want to talk about this deep seeded enemy that lurks within, but often shows on our face. The enemy? \_\_\_\_\_ ! So here is the riddle:

**How does this enemy show on your face? \_\_\_\_\_ Worry lines! (on your brow)**

Let's look at what Scripture has to say about that enemy that some say shows on your face.

*Is worry an enemy of ours ? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

The slogan of many Christians today is, “why trust when you can worry?” That slogan is not new – Christ, Himself, had to address the problem in the first century. Our minds are frequently weary with worry... our spirits are often weighted down. The resulting worry from yesterday’s guilt adds to our anxiety over tomorrow’s uncertainties. We find ways to hide our worry from others. In fact, we give it other titles and usually prefer our more acceptable references that almost make worry seem like a good thing.

**Other Names for Worry:**

1. “I’m concerned about...”
  2. “I am troubled by that...”
  3. “That really disturbs me...”
  4. “I’m just interested...”
  5. “I’m bothered by that...”
- ...etc., etc., etc.

In the final analysis, however it’s usually plain old “worry”... anxiety, mental distress, fretting, wringing of hands, a lack of inner peace, and preoccupied agitation. It seem that this enemy that plagues the life of literally every human being at some point has been with us from the very beginning. Let’s first set our attention on understanding this enemy a little bit, then lets trace it’s beginnings. Finally we will look at Christ’s counsel, then look at a string of biblical worriers, and finally note four “P’s” to help us overcome, and find victory over this enemy that has a tendency to show on our face... worry!

**I. GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT WORRY**

Ours has been called, “The Age of Anxiety.” People’s faces show it (taut, constricted, intense, we say they have “worry lines” What is that anyways?) People’s attitudes show it (disquieted, apprehensive, vexed). Relationships show it... there is distrust and alienation. There are the physical signs of worry: we call it hyper-tension (high blood pressure), ulcers, nervous breakdowns, and even heart disease is sometimes associated with anxiety and worry.

**What are people worried about today?** List some of the worries of people today.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>Daily provision</u> | 6. <u>Personal relationships (mate)</u>               |
| 2. <u>Employment</u>      | 7. <u>Personal relationships (family, friends)</u>    |
| 3. <u>The future</u>      | 8. <u>Pleasing people</u>                             |
| 4. <u>Life and death</u>  | 9. <u>Finances</u>                                    |
| 5. <u>Health</u>          | 10. <u>Spiritual matters (salvation, death, etc.)</u> |

**Worldly Advice Concerning “Worry”:** The world is full of advice when it comes to “worry” and sometimes it may even sound “Christian” or like the right way to handle worry. The following are some of the ways the world says to handle worry... some of the advice we may sometimes give or receive.

1. **“Just think positive!”** – You know what I hate about this one is that sometimes the reality is there is not much to think positive about and this advice can sound very insensitive to what a person is going through.
2. **“It will probably never happen anyway!”** – Yet then again it might and it could! Doesn’t help much really for a worrier!
3. **“You need to get control of yourself!”** - We are really not in control or in charge of as much as we think we are. Many things are totally out of our control and that’s the problem.
4. **“Just be happy; laugh your troubles away!”** – What is wrong with this advice?
5. **“You need to get busy doing active things... it’ll take your mind off of it!”** –
6. **“Just numb the pain and worry will go away!”** – What is wrong with this one? When you come off of your numbing high (or low as the case may be) the things make you worry are still there and now may be compounded.
7. **“Worry is a sin so just stop it!”** – Listen, some people are just hard-wired worriers!

Reality is... we do worry! We all worry sometimes. We may not all be “big worriers” or “habitual worriers.” Some worry more than others, but we all have worries, cares and anxious moments. Christians worry? How do I grow despite and through worry?

#### Developing a Christian Attitude Toward “Worry”:

1. **Realize that worry is the opposite of faith** - As defined above, “worry” is contrary to the attitudes and activity that God would have Christians to be involved with. Dr. John MacArthur says, “Worry, by nature, is the product of a lack of faith and trust in God.” We need to come to the realization within our own minds that God does not desire for me to worry about a matter, but rather to commit it to Him.
  - (1) **Worry fails to take God into account in the situation**
  - (2) **Worry is a self-oriented assumption of responsibility** – That is what Jesus meant when we said, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” (Mt.6:27).
  - (3) **Worry is the opposite of faith** - “Whatever is not from faith is sin” according to Romans 14:23.
2. **Focus on God** - Rather than have a “divided mind” concerning the situation, we are to look to God in the midst of the situation.
3. **Pray about it** - Looking to God in prayer should be our response to worry. Such prayer should be done in faith. The result will be “peace” in place of bothersome, disquieting “worry”
4. **Keep a Christian perspective** - Remember that a Christian’s perspectives and responses to situations is to be different.

#### Different Christian Perspective in Worry:

- (1) **Christians do not seek to escape, withdraw or remove all problems.**
- (2) **Christians are not indifferent, apathetic, or unconcerned in situations**
- (3) **Christians know that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28)**

## **2 Perspectives on Worry:**

1. **A Biblical Perspective** – The word “worry,” as it appears in our English language, does not surface in the text of the King James Bible. However the concept does. To convey the thought, such words have been used as “anxiety,” “care,” “trouble,” “concern,” and “fret” or “fretting.” In the New American Standard Bible text of Matthew 6:25-34, the term “being anxious” has been employed to convey the thought of worry, and is used no less than six times. What does it mean to be anxious?
2. **A Practical Perspective** – To be anxious is to be “divided” or “distracted.” Literally the Greek words translated as “worry” (NIV) or “anxious” (NAS) in Matthew 6 is the Greek word “merimnao” and it means “to divide the mind” or “to have a divided mind.” In other words, your mind is distracted, weighted down, concerned, preoccupied with care... it’s divided by something or someone. The thought is that of being so mentally ill-at-ease that the individual is distracted. Such people cannot do what they are supposed to do... or want to do... because they are divided in their thinking. An excellent example of this is Martha in Luke 10:38-42 (READ). What was Martha’s problem? She was “worried” about everything that had to be done. Not the phrase in **verse 40, “But Martha was *distracted* by all the preparations that had to be made...”** Mental distraction – or worry – leads to agitation. Why? Because the person with the problem of worry is caught in the middle.

## **II. BACK TO THE GARDEN TO MEET THIS ENEMY (Genesis 2:15-25, Genesis 3:1-12)**

In Genesis 2 we find the first picture of human life devoid of really anything to worry about at all. There we read about the Garden of Eden – a place of unimaginable beauty and bounty... a place of perfect innocence and provision. It was truly an “*Hakuna Matata*” existence! (from the Disney movie, Lion King). “Hakuna Matata” is a Swahili phrase that can be translated literally as “There are no worries.” Literally there were no worries in the garden... none at all! The enemy of worry did not exist in Genesis chapter 2. In such an environment, God created everything man needed, food and sustenance, protection, perfect weather conditions, free from disease... perfect. And it that wasn’t enough God wanted every provision taken care of for man so He made a suitable help mate, partner for him, and they were in perfect relationship as expressed in chapter 2 of Genesis.. The relationship they enjoyed is simply expressed in **verse 25, “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”** Remember the Hebrew word for “naked” in this context means “to be laid bare” or “poured out completely.” Their relationship with one another was fully transparent; they were open and unguarded in every way toward each other. The Hebrew term translated “no shame” or “not ashamed” carries a reciprocal idea here which means “they were not ashamed before one another.” Listen, the were not worried about what the other person thought of them, they were not worried about what they looked at, or thought of them. No worries! Adam and Eve experienced an innocent, non-defensive relationship. Between them there were no hidden areas; all forms of resistance were lacking. The enemy of worry had not yet reared it ugly head! So were did this enemy that show on our face... worry come from? Hum!

### **3 Observations About A Worry Free Life:**

1. **A proper focus and understanding of God, and who He is a necessity for a worry-free life** – When our lives become engrossed in the cares and worries of this life, we have taken our focus off of God and put them on our circumstances or whatever that thing is that worries us. If we understand the “bigness” and “sovereignty” of God our worries not only diminish in size they disappear in comparison to who He is and what He can do for us. I love Peter at this point in **1 Peter 5:7**... great verse, **“Cast all your care (anxieties, worries) upon him because He cares for you.”** Every care... He really does!
2. **A genuine faith expressed and practiced (lived out), will enable the production of a worry-free life** - God still provides all that we need... all that we need. That didn't end in the garden. What did end, was our ability to trust Him for His provision without worrying about it! We don't really have to look out for our own best interested. God already that that in mind. Paul gives us a “Garden of Eden” type promise in **Philippians 4:19** says, **“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”**
3. **A realistic face toward the struggles and hardships of this life, will better equip you to deal with those challenges in a worry-free way** – The one thing we know is that the things that cause us to worry and fret, and be bombarded by this enemy of worry are a reality. To deny the existence of those things that make us worry is to live in an unrealistic dream state, and to court danger. It may, in fact, cause us to be caught off guard, blindsided by life in such a way that the threat poised is even more detrimental to our faith. A believer should be honest and realistic about the heartaches, struggles and trial that are sure to come in this life. Jesus even warns us of such in **John 16:33**,<sup>33</sup> **“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** Notice along with the warning is also the promise toward a worry-free life, **“in me you may have peace... I have overcome the world.”** Get it?

Okay... so Adam and Eve are in a perfect place, in a worry-free environment, “Hakuna Matata,” “There are no worries.” Then came sin, an event that radically affected all of human history. In direct opposition to God's command, Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-6, see Gen. 2:16-17). And when they did according to **verse 7**, **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”**

### **2 Worrisome Results of Sin:**

1. **Worried about themselves** - The first result of their sin was not rebellion or hostility but a sudden concern for themselves, as shown by their shame over their nakedness. Each immediately began to worry about being “naked.” **verse 7**, **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”** Interestingly, they apparently weren't worried about that before. Listen, this puts worry in direct link with sin! Consequently, they began to worry about how they were going to cover up their unclothed bodies.
2. **Worried about others, including God** – Particularly, they were worried about what the other person thought of them (hence the clothing) and especially we see they began to worry about their relationship with God. As a matter of fact they were so worried about

what God would think that they tried to hide themselves from God. Verse 8 says, *“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”* The very garden that was created by God for their good pleasure, they turned into a sinner’s hideout for worriers! Then the all-knowing God called out to Adam *“Where are you?”* (v.9), that is *“Why are you trying to conceal yourself?”* And Adam responded in verse 10 by saying, *“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”* God’s penetrating reply/question to Adam was, *“Who told you that you were naked?”* (v.11a). Until sin shattered paradise, Adam and Eve were worry-free and they were completely unaware of their own physical condition. But now that had changed. Relationship were now characterized by worry, even to the point of pointing fingers of blame and distrust... worry began to show on their faces, and the furrowed brow began.

What we see in this account of the first human sin has since been reenacted in countless ways throughout human history. Sin brings with it a worrisome life... our worries center on ourselves and others, and they alienate us from a God who cares about us and want to be in relationship with us and provide for all of our needs just as He did in the garden.

### III. TO ANOTHER GARDEN FOR SPECIFIC ARGUMENTS AGAINST WORRY (Matthew 6:25-34)

Early in His ministry, Christ delivered a significant address that clarified His message and ministry. It stood as a sharp contrast to the predominant teachings of the religious pros of the day (the Pharisees). In the greatest sermon ever preached, “The Sermon on the Mount” (a garden in it’s own right), Jesus drew from a picturesque garden picture... perhaps not unlike the garden of Eden to teach warn about the enemy of worry. His conclusions about worry are as meaningful today as they were to His first-century listeners. Let’s summarize them.

#### 5 Biblical Arguments Against Worry:

1. **Worry keep us from enjoying what we have (v.25)** – *“... Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”* Worry focuses our attention on what we do not have, and undermines the enjoyment of what we already possess. It prompts us to assume responsibility that is not ours to handle.
2. **Worry makes us forget our worth (v.26)** – *“... Are you not much more valuable than they? (the birds who do not labor or spin)”* Worry makes us forget that God is not the heavenly Father of the bird... but the heavenly Father of man. It makes us feel forgotten and unimportant. If He will feed a bird (a lesser creature), He will feed us without fail.
3. **Worry is completely useless (v.27)** – *“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”* Christ was making reference to man’s inability to either add a year to his life, or to add an inch to his height. As a matter of fact, worry results in subtraction, not addition. It leads to a loss, not a gain.
4. **Worry erases the promise of God from your mind (vv.30-32)** – *“... So do not, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... your heavenly Father know that you need them.”* What David learned, we tend to forget... he says it like this in Psalm 37:25, *“I was young and now I am old, yet I*

*have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.”* God’s love for man motivates Him to care for those who walk with Him. Nothing can separate the believer from that love. As **Romans 8:38-39** says, *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

5. **Worry is characteristic of the heathen, not the Christian (v.32)** – *“For the pagans run after all these things (food, drink, clothing).”* When one excludes God’s personal involvement in his life, he has no one substantial on whom to lean. For all practical purposes, the worrier is alone and lives just as the one who lives without God in his or her life.

#### IV. **A WISE PSALM FROM THE GARDEN OF LIFE FOR WORRIERS (Psalm 37)**

This psalm shares the wisdom of an old man, David, who had had much to worry with in his life time, but who had walked with the Lord as reflected in **verse 25**, *“I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken...”* He had battled evil men and knew frustration of seeking the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. As he reviewed the past, he gave some wise counsel to worriers... fretters both in his day in the days to come... our included. (READ: Psalm 37:1-7... *notice all the garden and horticulture references in this Psalm*)

Notice the word “fret” that appears in verses 1, 7, 8. The word translated here as “fret” literally means “to heat oneself in vexation” or “to be vexed” (vexation – something or someone that causes anxiety or worry/vex – disturb the peace of mind of, divide the mind). This is the Hebrew word that is the equal of the Greek idea/word translated in Matthew 6 as “worry.” David is telling us he has learned in his old age and much living that there are some helps for worriers or fretters...

#### **Wise Counsel for Worriers:**

1. **Trust in the Lord (v.3)** – Listen if you walk by sight and not by faith you will find it easy to fret and worry. There is promise here in verse 3 for God’s protection and safe keeping with we put our trust fully in Him.
2. **Delight yourself in the Lord (v.4)** – Find your joy and pleasure in His will. Make Him your delight, and your desires will be in His will. Living to please the Lord sets you free from fretting and worrying about whatever...
3. **Commit your way to the Lord (v.5)** – What does this do to worry? When you trust Him and delight in Him, how could you do anything other than commit your way to Him? Let God guide your steps, choose your joys, protect your name, bless your work.
4. **Rest in the Lord** – Restlessness is an evidence of unbelief and worry. Faith rests in the Lord and enjoys “the peace of God, which passes all understanding” (Phil 4:7). God sometimes waits in answering prayer so that He might strengthen our patience.

#### V. **A TIMELY PRESCRIPTION FOR FINDING VICTORY OVER WORRY**

Four words help us translate this study into practice. Each one represents a discipline in which we need to engage if we are to grow through and beyond worry.

**Prescription for the Problem of Worry:**

1. **Presence** – Claim the presence of God in your life (Joshua 1:9, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20) *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” – Joshua 1:9*
2. **Promises** – Get into the Word of God and learn of His assurances (Psalm 37:4-5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 26:3-4) *“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this.” –Psalm 37:4-5*
3. **Prayer** – Maintain communication with God, built around specifics (Psalm 55:22, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7). Max Lucado says, “No one can pray and worry at the same time.” *“Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall.” –Psalm 55:22*
4. **Patience** – Don’t allow Satan to sell you short and steal the victory that could be yours (Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Romans 8:25) *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” –Psalm 27:14*