

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 12, 2017 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

NO PAIN, NO GAIN
“How God Grows Us”

Growing Through the Pain of Worry
Matthew 6:25-34, Psalm 37

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 with worry. And our faith is often stunted by worry. 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. What are some phrases or words we use to make “worry” sound... well better?

Sugary Replacement Phrases for Worry: *These are words or phrases that make our inclination to “worry” sound better.*

1. **“I’M JUST CONCERNED”**
2. **“THAT REALLY TROUBLED ME”**
3. **“I’M DISTURBED BY THAT”**
4. **“I’M JUST INTERESTED”**
5. **“I’M BOTHERED BY THAT”**

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. Let’s first set our attention on Christ’s counsel, then look at a string of biblical worriers, and finally note four “P’s” to help us overcome and grow beyond our worrying.

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.

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|---------------------------|--|
| 1. DAILY PROVISION | 6. Personal relationships (mate) |
| 2. EMPLOYMENT | 7. Personal relationships (family, friends) |
| 3. THE FUTURE | 8. Pleasing people |
| 4. LIFE AND DEATH | 9. Finances |
| 5. HEALTH | 10. Witnessing (<i>Luke 12:11, "When you are brought before the synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say."</i>) |

3 Categories of Worry: Worry tends to fall within one of three categories

1. Worry about **DEATH** (personal death or demise of a loved one)
2. Worry over **GUILT** (even over something confessed)
3. Worry about **DAILY PROBLEMS** (related to people, finances, possessions, education, vocation, etc.)

The last category gnaws away at most every one of us in some way.

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. **Don't worry... it's a waste of time; 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. **Don't worry... don't believe the situation is real; it's an illusion -**
3. **Don't worry... it may never happen** – Yet then again it might and it could! Doesn't help much really for a worrier!
4. **Don't worry... get control of yourself; you're in charge – Really!** 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.
5. **Don't worry... buy enough insurance for every eventuality** – What is wrong with this advice? There are some things money can't buy.
6. **Don't worry... be happy; laugh your troubles away** – What is wrong with this advice?
7. **Don't worry... bite the bullet; you'll feel no pain** –
8. **Don't worry... if might get better, but it'll probably get worse** –
9. **Don't worry... get busy doing active things; it'll take your mind off of it** –
10. **Don't worry... have another drink, hit, pill; numb the pain and worry** –
11. **Don't worry... so see your therapist** –
12. **Don't worry... it's all going to be over soon** –
13. **Don't worry... these circumstances are just the "cross" you have to bear** –
14. **Don't worry... it a sin; stop it! – I wish I could! Some people are 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.

II. BIBLICAL WORRIERS (Various)

Worrying seems to be our common fate. The hymn writer said we are “prone to wander, Lord I feel it,” but we are also “prone to worry, Lord I feel it.” We really are! And we are in the company of many of our Biblical heroes who also exhibited times of worry, fret, and wringing of their hands. Let’s look at just a few Biblical worriers and what made them worry, the results of their worry, and perhaps some helpful principles to apply to our own inclination to worry.

1. **ADAM and EVE** (Gen. 3:1-7) – Eve bought the enemies (Satan’s) lie and worried that God was trying to keep something good from them, Adam and Eve
 - (1) **What were they (Eve) worried about?** That God was trying to keep something good from them.
 - (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** No, their worry was not justified because God had provided them with everything they needed in their life. However, we are often given to the same worries in our life... it is the worry that we are missing out on something good, that we are somehow being slighted, or overlooked.
 - (3) **What was the result of their worry?** Ultimately sin, but the immediate result was that they took matters into their own hands and disobeyed God’s command.
 - (4) **What did their worry reveal in their life?** A lack of trust in God
 - (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* We never have to worry about God trying to keep for us what is good. He always wants what is best for us.
2. **ABRAHAM** (Gen. 12:10-20) – Abraham worried that someone might kill him and take his wife so he lied
 - (1) **What was he (Abraham) worried about?** That he might be killed and lose everthing because of his wife,
 - (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** No, their worry was not justified because of God’s promise to him to make a great nation through him. God would protect him, because His hand was on His life. However, we are often given to the same worries in our life... worry for our own health and welfare.
 - (3) **What was the result of his worry?** Ultimately sin... he lied, but the immediate result was that others suffered because of Abraham’s worry. A plague came on the Egyptians. Abrahams worry was costly and caused others to lose our on God’s blessing
 - (4) **What did his worry reveal in his life?** A lack of trust in God
 - (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* Worry in our life doesn’t only affect us, but it can affect the lives of others too, and cause all involved to miss out on God’s best for their lives.
3. **SAMUEL** (1 Samuel 16:1-13) – Samuel worried that King Saul would kill him if he found out that he had anointed a new king (David)
 - (1) **What was he (Samuel) worried about?** Samuel was worried about King Saul’s wrath if he found out he was off anointing a new king. He was perhaps afraid for his life.
 - (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** Yes and no! His worry was justified because surely King Saul would have imprisoned, if not killed Samuel, if he

found out he had anointed another as king in his place. But really his worry was not justified because he was just obeying God's command and God would protect him.

- (3) **What was the result of his worry?** No result really, because Samuel overcame his worry for himself and obeyed God
- (4) **What did his worry reveal in his life?** I really think Samuel's worry revealed his humanity and that we all worry sometimes.
- (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* When God calls us to do something we can trust Him without worrying about the result. He will take care of us.

➡ 4. **JONAH** (Jonah 1:1-3 & 4:1-3) – Jonah worried that God would bless and save his enemies.

- (1) **What was he (Jonah) worried about?** He was worried that God would have mercy on his enemies, bless and save his enemies.
- (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** Yes and no! His worry was justified because, as Jonah well knew, God is full of mercy and abundantly pardons and if Nineveh repented God would forgive. But not, Jonah's worry really was not justified because he needed to trust God and as His prophet he was called to do what God called him to do without question.
- (3) **What was the result of his worry?** Running from God, storms that nearly cost him and others their lives, nearly drowning himself, getting swallowed by a giant fish and spending three night wondering if he would survive.
- (4) **What did his worry reveal in his life?** Perhaps that sometimes our worries are selfish and motivated by our own selfish desires and wants. His worry really revealed a greater love for himself than for others.
- (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* Worry may cause us to run from God and to run into some very costly consequences.

➡ 5. **Peter** (Matthew 16:21-23) – Peter worried that Jesus was going to get himself killed. Worry causes us to play God in our life and the lives of others. Peter actually thought he knew better than Jesus (God in the flesh), how things ought to be, but the sharp rebuke came, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (v.23)

- (1) **What was he (Peter) worried about?** Peter was worried that Jesus was going to get Himself killed, and in reality He was. That is why He came, but Peter didn't yet understand that. His worry for Jesus was just loyalty and being protective of him. Yet it also revealed that he thought he knew better than God and a lack of trust in Jesus.
- (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** Yes and no! His worry was justified in a sense, because he was just being protective and loyal to Jesus... not wanting any harm to come to Him. But his worry really wasn't justified because it revealed a lack of truth in Jesus.
- (3) **What was the result of his worry?** His worry drew a sharp rebuke from Jesus and in verse 23. Displeasure to the God... worry essentially tells God He doesn't know what He's doing!

- (4) **What did his worry reveal in his life?** That his worry really was misdirected and based more on what he did not know or understand. It really revealed a lack of trust in God/Jesus and his ways and plans.
- (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* Even when things don't make sense to us we don't have to worry because God is in control and knows what He is doing. A second principle might be: Worry is essentially like telling God that He doesn't know what He is doing.
- ➔ 6. **James and John (Matthew 20:20-28)** – James and John worried about a place of prominence for themselves.
- (1) **What were they (James and John) worried about?** They were worried about a place of prominence and position for themselves, about their own advancement in the company, and getting ahead.
- (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** No... not at all! Their worry was selfish and presumptuous.
- (3) **What was the result of his worry?** Their worry drew a rebuke from the Lord and created friction and division among their friends (the disciples).
- (4) **What did their worry reveal in their life?** Their worry revealed a selfishness and pride, a selfish ambition and a heart that was wrongly directed more toward getting ahead than really following Jesus.
- (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* What we worry about may reveal selfishness or idolatry in our heart.
- ➔ 7. **Martha (Luke 10:38-42)** – Martha worried about food preparation. 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.
- (1) **What was she (Martha) worried about?** Food preparation, house work, and everything that had to be done... being a good host and tending to chores.
- (2) **Was worry justified? Why or why not?** Yes and no! Her worries were perhaps aimed in a somewhat important direction... taking care of Jesus and His needs, but she was more concerned with meeting His needs than spending time with Him.
- (3) **What was the result of his worry?** She missed out on spending time with Jesus like her sister Mary.
- (4) **What did her worry reveal in her life?** That she was distracted and so caught up in earthly things, needs and what had to be done that she missed the bigger picture.
- (5) **Principle to Apply:** *What is a life principle from this story/passage that we may apply to our lives today concerning worry?* Our worries distract us and keep us from the greater things of spending time with Jesus.

III. 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). 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 keeps 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 heath, 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 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 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 GROWING THROUGH 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 Growing Through 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*

“Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere!” – Vance Havner