

# PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS

## Lesson – 3

### "The Problem of Worry and Anxiety"

#### INTRODUCTION:

- I. If you were to search through a concordance based on the King James Version or the American Standard Version of the Bible, it might surprise you to discover that the word "worry" is not listed.
  - A. This DOESN'T mean that the Bible says nothing about "worry" – because the Scriptures say A LOT on the subject.
    1. It's just that some translations don't use the word "worry."
  - B. Instead, you'll find the subject of "worry" disguised by several other words.
    1. Words like:
      - a. Care.
      - b. Anxiety or anxious.
      - c. Burden.
      - d. Trouble.
      - e. Fear.

C. In fact, depending on the translation you use, Jesus uses the word "worry" no less than 6 times in 10 verses in the Sermon on the Mount. **(Matt. 6:25-34)**

1. The word "worry," used here by Jesus, carries the idea of "being divided or distracted."

a. That's because worry always divides or distracts our attention from the things of God, and shifts them into another direction altogether.

b. Worry is meant to trouble and distress us – to cause mental and emotional distress that keeps us from having the right focus.

D. Let's take a closer look at Matthew chapter 6, where Jesus presents five arguments against worry.

## **BODY:**

I. Five Arguments Against Worry.

A. First – Jesus says worry keeps us from enjoying what we already have. **(Matt. 6:25)**

1. Unfortunately, we live in a society that encourages worry.

- a. We're constantly bombarded with advertising that always shows us something WE DON'T HAVE, but something WE'RE MADE TO THINK WE NEED!
  - (1). We don't have the right body weight -- so there's this diet program or that one.
  - (2). We don't have "natural color hair" anymore (because we've turned gray) – so there's this instant hair color (some "Just For Men").
  - (3). We don't have the right breakfast cereal --so now they've made one that's "Just Right!"
  - (4). We don't have:
    - (a). The right deodorant...
    - (b). The right jeans...
    - (c). The right shoes...
    - (d). The right car...
    - (e). The right house, or the right neighborhood...
  
- b. Is it any wonder why we're all a little neurotic, especially since none of us have it all, and the one we have isn't the RIGHT one?

2. Sadly, anxiety robs us of the ability to enjoy the things we HAVE (or the things we can AFFORD to have) by keeping our eyes on things we DON'T HAVE (or CAN'T afford).
3. Worry "distracts" us from things of real value, and causes us to become pre-occupied with things that really are aren't all that important.
  - a. This was Martha's problem (Mary and Lazarus' sister).

**(Luke 10:38-42)**

**B. Second – Worry makes us forget our worth. (Matt 6:26)**

1. Scientists tell there are well over 8,000 species of birds, and the Scriptures tell us that God feeds them all.
  - a. And yet, for all their beauty and diversity, JESUS DID NOT DIE FOR A SINGLE BIRD!
  - b. He died for US!
2. It's hard to imagine that we could EVER doubt our value in God's eyes.
  - a. And yet, when we begin to worry, the first thing that often goes out the window is our memory of the Savior's love.

- (1). Our minds become flooded with, "Why me? Why this? Why Now? What does God have against me?"
  3. When you begin to forget your worth in God's eyes, just remember:
    - a. No bird was:
      - (1). Ever the object of God's SACRIFICIAL love in the giving of His Son (i.e. Jesus never died for a bird).
      - (2). Ever created in the image of God.
      - (3). Ever made an heir of eternal salvation.
- C. Third – Worry is a waste of time, because it keeps us focused on things we can't change! **(Matt 6:27)**
  1. More literally translated, Jesus says, "Who of you can add any length to your lifespan by worry."
    - a. Worry certainly won't INCREASE our life span – if it does anything, it will probably SHORTEN it!
  2. Furthermore, we can lie awake all night, fret all we want, but when we wake up in the morning those problems will still be there.
    - a. So, worry never solves problems – but getting up and DOING something about the situation will (if it's in our power to solve the problem).

- b. And, if it's NOT in our power to change the situation, then we need to turn the problem over to the Lord and lay it at the feet of Jesus.
  - c. We'll say more about this in a moment.
- D. Fourth – Worry causes us to forget about the promises of God (about God's providential care). **(Matt 6:30-31)**
- 1. When difficult times come, it's easy to forget how much God has actually blessed us.
    - a. When we're all knotted up with worry, we forget about all the times in the past when God saw us safely through similar situations.
    - b. Instead, we become obsessed with questions like:
      - (1). "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"
      - (2). "Where will we live?" or "What job am I going to get now?" or "How am I going to support my family?"
  - 2. There is a great promise God made to everyone of us:
    - a. The apostle Paul wrote: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.*

*For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb. 13:5)*

- b. This doesn't mean that God promises a care-free life, but He DOES promise to take care of us and our needs.
- E. Finally – Worry is characteristic of the unbeliever, not the Christian.

**(Matt 6:32)**

- 1. Brother Homer Hailey once said, "Worry is the sign of unbelief in the Christian."
  - a. How true!
  - b. Worrying about tomorrow is something the "unbelievers" and the "unbelieving Christians" do."
    - (1). As long as the "unbeliever" or "unbelieving Christian" keep their backs turned toward God, their lives will be spent serving that tyrannical master called "Worry."
  - c. But the Christian has a solution – We don't need to worry about a matter; instead, we need to turn the matter over to God and leave it there.
    - (1). We need to lay the matter at the feet of Jesus.

- (2). And, once we've done that, we need to believe that the Lord will deal with the situation in a way that will be in our best interest.
- (3). It may not be the way we would like, but if we fully trust in the Lord to do what is in our best interest, we won't need to worry anymore.

II. So, How Do We Handle Worry – How Can We Get a Grip On The Problem of Worry? (By Considering 4 Things – "Presence," "Promise," "Prayer," and "Patience"):

A. Presence – Claim God's Presence (We are NOT alone).

1. God has promised to ALWAYS be with us.

a. **Isaiah 41:10**

b. **Joshua 1:9**

B. Promise – Discover God's Promise in His Word.

1. God not only promises to be "WITH US," but He also promises peace and consolation.

a. **Isaiah 26:3-4**

b. **Proverbs 3:5-6** (literally, God "will make smooth and straight your path").

c. **Psalms 4:6-8**

C. Prayer – Specify Your Needs (Be Specific).

1. Be specific when you bring your concerns to the Lord.
  - a. **Philippians 4:6-7** (Literally, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will stand sentinel around your hearts and minds...")
  - b. **Psalms 55:22 (1 Pet. 5:7)** (Literally, "throw far away, with all your might, your burdens on the Lord...")

D. Patience – Let The Lord Do It His Way, and In His Own Time.

1. The Lord can do wonderful things for those who "wait on the Lord!"
  - a. **Isaiah 40:28-31**
2. There are 4 things we can gain from "waiting on the Lord":
  - a. Get new strength.
    - (1). "...shall renew their strength..."
  - b. Get new perspective.
    - (1). "...shall mount up with wings like eagles..."
  - c. Develop endurance.
    - (1). "...shall run and not be weary..."
  - d. Deepen our determination to stay strong.
    - (1). "...shall walk and not faint!"

3. In time, the Lord will bring about what is best for us (although it may not be WHAT we want, WHEN we want it, or the WAY we want it).

- a. **Romans 8:28**

### III. Let's Return to Jesus' Teaching on Worry in Matthew to Notice Two Things Jesus Says We Can Do To Overcome Worry.

#### A. Seek First Two Things. **(Matt 6:33)**

1. First, Jesus said seek the "kingdom of God."
  - a. This is seeking God's authority over every area of our life.
  - b. It means placing the Lord Jesus Christ in control of our will and truly making Him the "King."
    - (1). Remember Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is within you!" **(Luke 17:21)**
  - c. I have to RELEASE my grip on my desires and PLACE THEM IN GOD'S HANDS.
2. Second, Jesus said seek "His righteousness."
  - a. This means seeking to be LIKE HIM – to foster the character of Jesus Christ in our own lives during the MIDST OF TRIALS!

- (1). This is what Peter meant by our becoming a "partaker of the divine nature." **(2 Peter 1:4)**

**B. Take One Day At a Time. (Matt 6:34)**

1. Live for today!

- a. Don't live in the backwash of all the mistakes of "yesterday."

- (1). No matter how much we would like to go back and re-live some of the days of our past, we can't.
- (2). There is simply no way we can erase the mistakes we made then.
- (3). But we can learn from those mistakes, and avoid making the same ones in the future (or help others avoid the mistakes we made).

- b. And don't live in the fear of "tomorrow."

- (1). No one can predict tomorrow!
- (2). We don't even know if there will be a tomorrow (the Lord may come, or this may be our last day on earth).
- (3). Montaigne (the great French philosopher) said it best: "My life is filled with misfortunes, most of which never happen."

c. So, "LIVE FOR TODAY!"

2. Let the Lord handle tomorrow.

a. "Cast all your cares on Him..."

C. The Story of Joseph Scriven

Joseph was born in 1819 to prosperous parents in Dublin, Ireland. He was a graduate of Trinity College in Dublin. Joseph was a man who knew tragedy well. On the night before he was to be married, his fiancée tragically drowned. It was soon after this, at the age of twenty-five, that Joseph decided to leave his native country and migrate to Canada. The move to Canada not only brought about a geographical distance between him and his family, it also caused his family to feel he had deserted them to follow his faith in Jesus Christ where he devoted his life to helping the underprivileged, giving them clothes and sharing his food. That rift between Joseph and his family in Ireland was never completely healed.

It was in 1855, while living in his new homeland, that Joseph heard word that his mother was seriously ill and not expected to live. Since he had no way of making the long voyage back to Ireland, he sat down to write her a long letter, and in that letter he included a poem he had written. It was the only way he knew to reassure his dying mother of the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Some years later, when Joseph was ill, a friend came to visit and found a copy of the same poem scribbled on a piece of paper near his bed. The friend asked if Joseph had written the poem, to which he humbly replied, "The Lord and I did it between us."

When Joseph recovered from his illness, that poem, along with others he had written, were published in a small collection which he titled *Hymns and Other Verses*.

In 1886, Charles Converse, who was a lawyer as well as an accomplished musician and composer, got permission from Joseph Scriven to set to music the poem Joseph had written to his mother. And in 1875, Ira D. Sankey heard the hymn and immediately fell in love with it and was granted permission to include it in a hymn book he was publishing called *Gospel Hymns No. 1*. Sankey would later say that out of all the hymns ever written, this was clearly his favorite. Although Joseph Scriven died August 10, 1886, he left us with the words of one of the most beautiful and most reassuring hymns for anyone facing trials and tribulations.

The hymn draws its title from the first line, which begin with the words:

*What a friend we have in Jesus,*

*All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged-  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness-  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!*

*Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge-  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee-  
Thou wilt find a solace there.*

- a. "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" (Song # \_\_\_\_\_)

**CONCLUSION:**

- I. Are you a worrier?
  - A. Remember what Jesus said:
    1. Worry keeps you from enjoying what you already have.

2. Worry keeps you from seeing your worth.
3. Worry keeps your focus on things you can't change.
4. Worry is characteristic of the unbeliever, not the Christian (it's a sign of unbelief in the Christian).

II. And, remember all those wonderful promises of God?

A. So, why aren't you able to enjoy them? Let me suggest two possible reasons.

1. One reason could be that you're not in God's family.
  - a. The promises He makes to be the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" are made to His children.
  - b. Therefore you need to be a part of God's family.
2. Another reason could be you've never truly surrendered your will to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - a. Are you a Christian who is still struggling with manipulation – trying to "do it my way" rather than letting Him "do it His way, in His time?"
  - b. If so, you need to trust in the Lord to keep His word, and **RELEASE** your situation into His hands – never forget  
What we have a friend in Jesus!