

## WORRY

- I. Representative Biblical references to “worry”
- A. Old Testament
- Ps. 37:1-7 - “Fret not yourself...trust in the Lord...trust in Him”
- Ps. 38:18 - “I am full of anxiety because of my sin”
- Ps. 94:19 - “my anxious thoughts multiply within me...”
- Prov. 12:25 - “anxiety in the heart of man weighs it down”
- Isa. 35:4 - “Say to those with anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not.””
- B. New Testament
- Matt. 6:25-34 - “do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, what you shall put on. ...men of little faith. Do not be anxious...for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things...”
- Matt. 10:19,20 - “do not be anxious about how or what you will speak...it is not you who speaks, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you”
- Mk. 4:18,19 - “the seed among thorns...are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches...enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful”
- Mk. 13:11 - “do not be anxious about what you will say...it is the Holy Spirit who speaks”
- Lk. 8:14 - “seed among thorns...choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life”
- Lk. 10:41 - “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things”
- Lk. 12:11 - “do not be anxious about what you should speak in your defense”
- Lk. 12:22-30 - “do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat, what you shall eat...O men of little faith...your Father knows what you need”
- Lk. 21:34 - “do not let your hearts be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life...keep on the alert, praying”
- I Cor. 7:21 - “were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it...”
- I Cor. 7:32-34 - “I want you to be free from concern. ...One who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife...his interests are divided”
- II Cor. 11:28 - “the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches”
- Phil. 2:20 - “Timothy...will be genuinely concerned for your welfare”
- Phil. 2:28 - “I have sent him that...I may be less concerned about you”
- Phil. 4:6,7 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God...shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”
- II. Attempting a definition of “worry”
- A. English word “worry” from Old English *wyrgan* and Old High German *wurgen*, both meaning “to strangle, to choke”
- B. Greek word *merimnao* used in most NT references above
1. Etymologically derived from *merizo* = “to divide;” and *nous* = “mind.” Thus means “divided mind” - cf. I Cor. 7:34
  2. Linguistically at time NT written, did not necessarily have negative connotation (“to be anxious, worried”), but often had a neutral orientation (“to be concerned, to care”).
- C. Difficult to distinguish sometimes between modern usage of English words “concern, worry, anxiety”

- a. “concern” means to “have an interest in, give attention to, be engaged by a situation, as a matter of consideration or responsibility”
  - b. “worry” is a disquieted uneasiness of mind, an anxious apprehension concerning an impending or anticipated situation; fretting about a foreboding misfortune or failure. (“Worried” and “anxious” are used as synonyms.)
  - c. “anxiety” has become a psychological designation of abnormal, overwhelming apprehension; anguished uncertainty and self-doubt about one’s ability to cope with the situation, to the point of becoming distressed, distraught, panicky or tormented.
- D. A working definition from a Christian perspective:
- a. “Concern” becomes “worry” when we fail to relate the situation that confronts us to the source of sufficiency in God.
  - b. To worry is to assume a responsibility that is not necessarily ours to assume; failing to recognize that God is bigger than any problem we might have, and loves us enough to seek our highest good in the midst of every situation.
  - c. Worry is a form of humanistic self-orientation that thinks, “It’s up to me to take care of this situation,” and is thus a form of practical atheism, acting as if there is no God to deal with the situation, or that God doesn’t know or care about the situation.

### III. “Worry” and the age we live in

- A. Ours has been called “The Age of Anxiety”
  - 1. People’s faces: taut, constricted, intense
  - 2. Attitudes: disquieted, apprehensive, vexed
  - 3. Relationships: distrust, alienation
  - 4. Physical signs: ulcers, nervous breakdowns, heart diseases
- B. What are people worried about?
  - 1. daily provision - cf. Matt. 6:35+
  - 2. employment
  - 3. future - cf. Matt. 6:34
  - 4. life and death
  - 5. health
  - 6. personal relationships
  - 7. personal relationships - children, family, friends
  - 8. pleasing people - cf. Lk. 10:41
  - 9. finances, interest rates, stock-markets
  - 10. witnessing - cf. Lk. 12:11
- C. The advice of the world concerning “worry”
  - 1. Don’t worry; it’s a waste of time; think positive!
  - 2. Don’t worry; don’t believe the situation is real; it’s an illusion
  - 3. Don’t worry; it may never happen
  - 4. Don’t worry; get control of yourself; you’re in charge
  - 5. Don’t worry; buy enough insurance for every eventuality
  - 6. Don’t worry; be happy; laugh your troubles away
  - 7. Don’t worry; bite the bullet; you’ll feel no pain
  - 8. Don’t worry; it might get better, but it’ll probably get worse
  - 9. Don’t worry; get busy doing active things; it’ll take your mind off
  - 10. Don’t worry; have another drink, hit, pill
  - 11. Don’t worry; go 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’s a sin; Stop it!

- IV. Developing a Christian attitude toward “worry”
- A. As defined above, “worry” is contrary to the attitudes and activity that God would have Christians to be involved with.
1. Fails to take God into account in the situation
  2. Self-oriented assumption of responsibility
  3. “Whatever is not from faith is sin” - Rom. 14:23
- B. Rather than having a “divided mind” concerning the situation, we are to look to God in the midst of the situation.
- Ps. 37:1-7 - “Fret not...trust in the Lord...”
- Ps. 42:11 - “Why are you in despair...hope in God”
- Ps. 55:22 - “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you”
- Matt. 6:32,33 - “your heavenly Father knows that you need these things; seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”
- I Peter 5:7 - “cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you”
- C. Looking to God in prayer should be our response
- Lk. 21:36 - “keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength”
- Phil. 4:6 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
- D. Such prayer is done in faith - “our receptivity of His activity”
- Ps. 62:8 - “Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him”
- James 5:15 - “prayer offered in faith”
- E. The result will be “peace” in place of bothersome, disquieting “worry”
- Numb. 6:26 - “The Lord lift up His countenance, and give you peace”
- Ps. 94:19 - “When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Thy consolations delight my soul”
- Jn. 14:27 - “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful”
- Phil. 4:7 - “the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”
- Col. 3:15 - “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts”
- F. Christian’s perspectives and responses to situations are different
1. Not seeking to escape, withdraw or remove all problems
  2. Not indifferent, apathetic, unconcerned in situations
  3. “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” - Rom. 8:28