

## What Shall I Do With Worry?

The dark cloud of worry has robbed many a good day from some of God's people. It has stolen joy from the heart of saints and given doubts and misgivings to those who otherwise could move mountains in faith. The overwhelming interference of worry should be dealt with. Would it not be nice to know that you may live abundantly without worry?

These are stressful days in which we live. Some are worried about finances, the election, and job security. Many are worried over health or a loved one's health. And some of the most painful and all-consuming thought-robbers of all - will my marriage survive? or my prodigal child become right with God?

There are different ways we respond to worry. We...

### **1) Defend Our Worry.**

We make excuses to justify our anxiety, such as cloaking our worry as a burden from the Lord. This is not the plan of God, nor does it give relief. Please observe the difference between worry and burden: "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*" (Galatians 6:2). "*For every man shall bear his own burden*" (Galatians 6:5). A casual reader of Scripture will see the contrast of these two verses as a contradiction or a paradox. It is neither. In Galatians 6:2, the word for "burden" is the Greek word βάρος, (baros) which is translated: heaviness, load, weight, burden or trouble. In Galatians 6:5 the Greek word for burden is φορτίον, (phortion), translated: the freight of a ship, a task or service, or metaphorically the obligations Christ lays upon his followers in contrast to the oppressive and excessive burden of the Pharisees. So the Lord is telling us to relieve the oppressive load that is heavy and troublesome to your brothers or sisters in Christ (Galatians 6:2). But then God is telling us that when He assigns us the task or service we are to render, He encourages us to take it ourselves and we need no help, for He will give the grace to bear the load He gives us (Galatians 6:5). Therefore, if the "burden" we are carrying has become worrisome and is weighting us down, it is not of the Lord. Jesus said, "*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*" (Matthew 11:30). Another ploy used is we attempt to...

### **2) Escape Our Worry.**

We sometimes think if we can go to another place, another time and be another person we will find relief from the "wild fires" of worry. The only problem is when we attempt to return to our real world, we may find the wild fires have given us a scorched earth, making our existence non-inhabitable. There is nothing wrong with diversion; it is when we pretend that the worry-causing problem doesn't exist that gets us into trouble. Escapism is likely into play if certain subjects or people are mentioned, sending us into a drastically downward spiral. When worry is not dealt with many will...

### **3) Explode Over Our Worry.**

This is most lethal response of all. At this point protectionism is in full force. Like a cornered animal, you lash out at anyone who comes near your corner. In modern warfare, we have the smart bomb, which locates and takes out specified objects. In some cases, atomic bombs have been dropped and take out the whole geography. Instead of taking the analytical calculated approach (why am I hurting, who is involved, how do I systematically approach these people with a goal to heal) we just drop the A-bomb of our explosive frustration believing that taking out everything and everybody is the answer. This is not the answer for the Bible says, "*For the wrath of man worketh not the*

*righteousness of God*” (James 1:20). And wrath is not the cure because you’ll end up getting hurt yourself and doing it again, “*A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again*”(Proverbs 19:19).

What constructive attitude can we take when it comes to worry? Here are some positive points!

### **1) Accept and own the problem.**

One of the most touching books is *Shadowlands*, the story of the life and love of C.S. Lewis and his wife Joy. Joy finally comes out with the inevitable truth, “I’m going to die.” Jack (C.S.) clenches his teeth in resistance and says, “Don’t worry about me.” She wisely sees him trying to escape and perhaps knowing he will eventually explode says, “I think it can be better than that. Better than just managing. What I am trying to say is that the pain then, is part of the happiness now.” The author went on to say he’d taken her for his wife, terminal cancer and all. In sickness and in health... until death. “That’s the deal,” said Joy quietly. Jack nodded, although he couldn’t think how he would be able to endure when the actual time came. The book closes with a return and resolution to the preceding conversation: “Why love, if losing hurts so much? I have no answers anymore, only the life I’ve lived. Twice in that life I’ve been given the choice, as a boy, and as a man. The boy chose safety. The man chooses suffering. The pain, now, is part of the happiness then. That’s the deal.”

Let us put away childish things (I Corinthians 13:11) and let us take up God’s perfect love; it may be painful, but not tormenting: “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love*”(I John 4:18). If we love to the max, we will hurt, but own it, hurt and all. As Joy said, “That’s the deal.” Alfred Lord Tennyson said *In Memoriam*, “I hold it true, whate’er befall; I feel it, when I sorrow most; 'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all.”

### **2) Take your worry to the Lord.**

We humans are so frail; we can only lift each other’s worries so far. We must eventually trust God for deliverance from the torment of worry. The Psalmist said, “*From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I*”(Psalm 61:2). When we come to the end of our resources (*the end of the earth*), lift up your heart to the Lord (*will I cry unto thee*). When there is nothing we can do (*when my heart is overwhelmed*), when I cannot see and think straight (*lead me*), take me to God, my Rock that lifts me to a higher vantage point to understand and if I cannot understand, I can at least be stabilized until I do understand. “*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you*”(I Peter 5:7)

### **3) Worry has term limits.**

The Bible says, “*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*” (I Corinthians 13:12). One day our existence in eternity will be swallowed up in God’s omniscient (all knowing) nature of His Majestic Person. Think of it, one hundred years from now, we who know the Lord will be in His presence. The Bible says, “*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away*”(Revelation 21:4).

May God give us the grace to think, live and act in the realm of eternity. We are creatures of the eternal. Worry, and all that causes it, is ascribed to the temporary. “*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*”(II Corinthians 4:16). Since worry has term limits, why not let it run its course without your company? “*Behold, God is my*

*salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2).*

- Pastor Pope -

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