

How To Worry Well

Let's admit it, worry is something we all do and something most of us think we shouldn't do. But worry itself is not a bad thing – it's how we worry and how we respond that determines if our sleepless nights are helpful or paralyzing, motivating or depressing, a path to despair or a path to peace.

WORRY

Proverbs 22:3/ 2 Corinthians 7:5-6 & 11:27-29/ Philippians 2:19-21/ Luke 22:41-45

Sometimes, worry can be a **good thing**.

We can't control our **feelings**.
We can control our **response**.

HOW TO WORRY WELL

The Secret to Finding Peace in A Scary Place

Philippians 4:4-9

❶ The right kind of **PRAYER**.

Philippians 4:6-7/Psalm 55:17/ Luke 18:1-8/ John 14:27

- ✓ Tell God exactly what **you want**.
- ✓ Thank God for all He's **already done**.
- ✓ Pray this prayer as often as **you need to**.

❷ The right kind of **FOCUS**.

Philippians 4:8 (see also Philippians 4:4)/ 1 Thessalonians 5:18 & 1 Peter 1:5-7/ 2 Corinthians 10:5

- ✓ What we **focus on** determines what we **see**.
- ✓ Focus on the **facts** not the **what ifs**.

❸ The right kind of **LIFE**.

Philippians 4:9 (see also Philippians 4:5)/ 1 Peter 3:12-14/ Proverbs 1:23-33

- ✓ Obedience breeds **confidence** – guilt produces **fear**.
- ✓ Sin removes God's **protection**.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 1, 2009

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on *How to Worry Well*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. This weekend we heard that worry is something we all do and something most of us think we shouldn't do. Here's a list of some of the most common areas we worry about. Mark the ones you're prone to worry about.

- Family concerns (kids, spouse, ex-spouse, siblings, parents, etc.)
- Job situation
- Financial challenges (paying the bills, college expenses, retirement, investments, etc.)
- Health issues
- Sudden tragedy (violence, accidents, natural disasters, etc.)
- Spiritual issues (for yourself and others)
- Relationship problems (friendships, dating, neighbors, etc.)
- Self-worth (insecurities, need for approval, peer pressure, etc.)
- Issues from your past
- Other: _____

As you think about the areas you're prone to worry about, are there any signs that indicate you've moved from proactive concern to unhealthy anxiety?

2. Larry mentioned that sometimes worry can be a good thing. Have you experienced times when worry has been a good thing for you? If so, explain?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We heard this weekend that part of worrying well is to develop the right kind of focus. In Philippians 4:4, Paul gives the Philippians advice on focusing when he twice tells them to "rejoice in the Lord always."

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! [NIV]

How can each of the following verses help you include more rejoicing in your life?

Romans 5:3

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; [NIV]

Psalms 13:5

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation. [NIV]

Psalm 31:7

I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul. [NIV]

Psalm 119:162

I rejoice in your promise
like one who finds great spoil. [NIV]

Proverbs 29:2

When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice;
when the wicked rule, the people groan. [NIV]

Have you seen the practice of rejoicing help you or someone you know deal with unhealthy worry? In what ways?

2. Jesus directly addressed the issue of worry in Luke 12:22-31. As you read the passage, jot down any reasons you see for not worrying.

Luke 12:22-31

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. [23] Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. [24] Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! [25] Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? [26] Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

[27] "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. [28] If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! [29] And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. [30] For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. [31] But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. [NIV]

If someone asked you to summarize what this passage says about worry in one sentence, what would you tell them?

Looking back on My Story question #1, what encouragement do you find in Luke 12:22-31 for the things you're prone to worry about?

3. Larry talked about the role prayer plays in finding peace in a scary place. David is an example of someone who often found himself in scary places and who prayed the right kind of prayers. He recorded several of these prayers in the Psalms. How do you see the principles of "tell God exactly what you want" and "thank God for all he's already done" reflected in David's prayers in Psalms 13 and 54?

Psalm 13:1-6

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

[2] How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

[3] Look on me and answer, O Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death;

[4] my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

[5] But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

[6] I will sing to the Lord,
for he has been good to me. [NIV]

Psalm 54:1-7

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, "Is not David hiding among us?"

Save me, O God, by your name;
vindicate me by your might.

[2] Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth.

[3] Strangers are attacking me;
ruthless men seek my life--
men without regard for God.

Selah

[4] Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.

[5] Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them.

[6] I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
I will praise your name, O Lord,
for it is good.

[7] For he has delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes. [NIV]

Can you think of any ways David's prayer could help you pray about the things that are causing you anxiety in your life right now? If so, explain.

TAKING IT HOME

1. In 1 Peter 5:7 we're told to "cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Are there any cares you have that you need to cast on Him?

2. Below is the Serenity Prayer, a well-known prayer that was written to help people experience God's peace. As you read this prayer, how does it affirm what you've learned from this week's teaching and homework?

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen."

-- Reinhold Niebuhr

Prayer Request

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