

# Biblical Living (4) – Worry - 2

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## The Replacements of Worry

### Trusting attitudes:

#### **1) Think rightly about God.**

Ecc 7:14. *In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider—God has made the one as well as the other ...*

Rom 8:28. *We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

Is 26:3. *The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.*

Ps 46:1. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Ecc 3:16-17. *Furthermore, I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness. I said to myself, "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man," for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.*

Ps 55:22. *Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you ...*

#### **2) Practise Christian joy.**

Phil 4:4. *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*

#### **3) Think about the nearness of God.**

Phil 4:5. *Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.*

The word *near* was used in the NT of being either *near in time* or *near in space*. However, Paul used the word only four times, and the other three all refer to physical proximity.

Living with God at your elbow is a big step towards worry-free living: *the Lord is near*.

#### **4) Enjoy God's good gifts.**

Ecc 5:18-20. *Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.*

Ecc 8:15. *So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.*

See also Ecc 9:7-9; 11:10

**5) Live one day at a time**—don't spread today's grace across tomorrow's problems.

Matt 6:34. *Do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Lam 3:22-23. *The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning.*

Point: Don't try to spread the grace that God gave you for today across tomorrow's problems. Apply today's grace to today's problems, and trust God for tomorrow.

*God's grace is perfectly sufficient to tackle the challenges of the day He gives that grace. But His grace will always prove inadequate if you try to spread it across tomorrow's problems as well. It's like buttering bread—the dab of butter that's more than adequate to cover one slice gets a bit thin if you try to spread it over a whole loaf. In the same way, don't try to spread God's strength for today over tomorrow, next month, or next year. (Joel James, Help! I Can't Handle All These Trials, 14)*

**6) Keep an eternal perspective.**

John 14:1, 3. *Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me .... If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*

Living with one foot in heaven will help you combat worry.

### **Trusting actions:**

**1) Memorise and meditate on Scripture.**

Ps 119:165. *Those who love Your law have great peace ...*

Ps 119:133. *Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.*

Fitzpatrick and Hendrickson: *Medicines can't teach us to think differently; they can only suppress the feeling we have in response to our thoughts. But God's word can teach us to think differently, leading to feelings of joy and peace instead of depression or anxiety. (Will Medicine Stop the Pain?, 57)*

Ps 56:3-4. *When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise ...*

When your mind is repeatedly distracted during the day:

Ps 119:164. *Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous ordinances.*

When you wake up in the middle of the night:

Ps 119:62. *At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to You because of Your righteous ordinances.*

## **2) Pray trusting prayers.**

*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, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*1 Peter 5:7. ... casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

## **3) Pray thankful prayers.**

*Phil 4:6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

Often our failure to sprinkle our prayers liberally with thanksgiving is what keeps us from experiencing God's peace.

*Col 4:2. Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.*

*Col 3:15. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

## **4) Don't torture yourself by imagining a host of worst-case scenarios.**

*Phil 4:8. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

Spurgeon's observation:

*Many of God's people are constantly under apprehensions of calamities which will never occur to them, and they suffer far more in merely dreading them than they would ... if [the calamities] actually came upon them. (quoted in Fitzpatrick and Hendrickson, Will Medicine Stop the Pain?, 123)*

*2 Cor 10:5. ... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*

*Phil 4:8. ...whatever is true ... dwell on these things.*

*Prov 3:5-6. Trust in the LORD with all your [thinking] and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

## **5) Learn to talk good theology to yourself.**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

*Have you realised that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you .... This [psalmist's] treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself.*

*The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself .... You must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. (Spiritual Depression, 20-21)*

Point: Worriers need to learn to *talk* good theology to themselves, rather than *listening* to the bad theology of their fears.

Two examples:

❖ Psalm 3:1-3

In the midst of Absalom's rebellion, David lectured his worries, rather than letting his worries lecture him.

❖ Psalm 33:6-21

Three attributes of God that helped this man face the war situation of v. 16-17 without worry.

- God's power (v. 6-9)
- God's sovereignty (v. 10-12)
- God's omniscience (v. 13-15)

**6) Do what you can do about the situation.**

Neh 4:9. *We prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.*

Divine sovereignty works in concert with legitimate human responsibility. Acting positively to address a worrisome situation is a great alternative to fretting or brooding.

Jay Adams:

*Brooding is thought without action. It is self-talk that does not focus upon God's solutions. It can have only bad effects. (The Christian Counselor's Manual, 372)*

A note on scheduling:

Worriers will often be benefited by writing out and sticking to a schedule. Constructive, ordered action helps avoid the wasted time and distraction of brooding.

**7) Take a holiday (or a walk—a twenty-minute holiday).**

Mental exhaustion often makes problems seem insurmountable and worry easier. Problems that seem invincible have a way of shrinking to manageable proportions when you're fresh and rested.

Mark 6:30-31. *The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and*

*rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)*

### **Trusting planning:**

#### **1) Plan ahead; don't worry ahead.**

*Prov 6:6-8. Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest.*

*Prov 21:5. The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.*

#### **2) Plan well, but trust God with the results.**

*Prov 16:9. The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.*

*Prov 21:31. The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the LORD.*

*Ecc 11:6. Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.*

### **Trusting release:**

#### **1) Consciously turn over to God situations and people that you can't change or influence.**

*Ps 46:10. Cease striving and know that I am God ...*