

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

"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, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philip. 4:6-7

### I. Basic worry maxims.

"I would as soon swear as fret." John Wesley.

"Worrying is like sitting in a rocking chair." It sure keeps you busy, but it doesn't get you anywhere. Worry is non-productive. Worry is counter-productive.

"Worry is being concerned about things over which I have little or no control."

"Worry is being concerned about things which are not my responsibility."

"Worry is not being concerned about the things that God defines as my responsibilities."

"Put responsibility for your problems on God. Flee to your knees, not a pill."

"The fear of poverty, and worrying about the future, as truly ensnares the souls of the relatively poor, as the love of wealth and pursuit of things ensnares the souls of the relatively rich."

### A. Situations that tempt you to worry and fear:

#### ***Circumstances of life***

Unexpected bills  
Reduction or loss of income  
Crippling injury, prolonged illness  
Imminent surgery  
Perceived loss of a relationship  
Searching for a new church, job, home, etc.  
Persecution, threats  
Children leaving home  
Difficult job or home situation  
Death

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

### ***Mental - Spiritual***

Refusing salvation in Christ Jesus  
Planning to sin or hiding past sins  
Procrastination, indecision  
Lack of prayer  
Not knowing the future  
Focusing on changing others  
Failing to deal with a sin in a biblical manner  
Refusing to forgive another  
Always wanting your own way  
Expecting perfection in others

### B.. Consequences of Anxiety or Fear

Muscle tension, aches, or soreness  
Fatigue  
Trouble falling or staying asleep  
Restlessness  
Sweating, or cold clammy hands  
Dizziness or light-headedness  
Nausea or stomach distress  
Trembling  
Shortness of breath  
Trouble concentrating  
Irritability or edginess  
Hot or cold flashes  
Exaggerated startle response  
Tightness in the chest  
Numbness or tingling sensations  
Fear of losing control or of going crazy  
Fear of dying  
Spiritual defeat and guilt  
Depression

### C. What the biblical teachings concerning worry and anxiety don't mean:

1. We are not talking about instinctive responses to life situations. Example: You'd better be worried if you put your hand on a hot stove.
2. Our Lord is not forbidding a valid concern for this life, expressed by diligent labor in responding to biblical responsibilities. Example: It is not a belief that if you sit down and read YOUR Bible from sun-up to sundown the Lord will send ravens to feed you.

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

"If any man will not work, neither let him eat." II Thes. 3:10-12

"If any man does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Timothy 5:8

3. Nor is the Lord prohibiting proper financial foresight, of providing for special needs through savings. "Go to the ant and consider her ways, how she stores up."

### D. Basic principles in Scripture concerning worry, anxiety, and fear:

1. "Do not worry," is given as a command in the Scripture. "Do not be anxious about anything..." Philippians 4:6

- a. This is a test of your love for the Lord.

"By this we know that we are children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." 1 John 5:2-3

- b. Disobedience to this command is sin and should be understood as such.

Anxiety is an expression of a lack of faith because the one who worries is essentially saying that "God cannot handle this situation in my life." "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." I Peter 5:7

Anxiety is therefore a sin because it is a positive denial of the sovereignty of God. "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things." Isaiah 45:7

Anxiety is a sin because it is disobedience. "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, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Anxiety is a sin because it doesn't redeem the time. "...Make the most of your time, because the days are evil." Ephes. 5:16

Anxiety is a sin because it damages the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" 1 Cor. 3:16

Sin causes anxiety. "For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin." Psalm 38:18

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

3. Something to worry about. Unless you are a child of God you have something to worry about. If you are not a child of God then you need to give yourself to a little worry, you have something to be anxious about. Once you have come to Him through repentance and faith, He becomes your Father in a very special way. Only then do the promises of overcoming worry apply to you.

### II. Your biblical response to situations that tempt you to fear and worry.

When you live to please yourself, circumstances that God designs to teach you to trust and obey Him instead become opportunities for you to fear and worry. Develop a specific plan to overcome anxiety, worry, and fear.

Take into consideration the following truths and practical steps:

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." [Ephes. 4:22-24](#)

- A. Express genuine repentance before God for any anxiety, worry, and fear that you have allowed in your life.
- B. Begin a war you expect to win against anxiety, worry, and fear.

God commands that we fight sin wholeheartedly:

"Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Hebrews 12:3-4

"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;" James 1:6-7

Resisting sin involves a commitment of our whole mind for victory, whatever the cost.

The Lord therefore will use small defeats to show us our utter need of Him. Thus, we may lose some minor battles but still win the war. These losses should only increase our determination to win the war. But if we don't really expect to win the war, then any small defeat will discourage us rather than point us on to God and victory.

- C. Give God's Spirit His most effective weapon by committing the key Scriptures related to worry, anxiety and fear.

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

Our battle against anxiety, worry, and fear is far more than some mental or physical struggle. It is spiritual warfare.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12

God does not only want us to conquer anxiety, worry, and fear; He wants us to use the pressure of the battle as daily motivation to transform our mind to His way of thinking. This will be achieved by the Holy Spirit if we give Him His weapon.

"Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:17

Here is a list of key Scriptures which must be in the mind of one who intends to conquer anxiety, worry, and fear:

"You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name." Deut. 6:13

"And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear, And will trust in the Lord." Psalm 40:3

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

"Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad." Proverbs 12:25

"The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life." Proverbs 22:4

"I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him." Eccles. 3:14

"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person." Eccles. 12:13

"For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

a single cubit to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:25-34

"Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap." Luke 21:34

"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" Romans 8:15

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1

"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, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philip. 4:6-7

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6-7

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." 1 John 4:18

- D. Put off anxiety and put on prayer. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Develop a plan for consistent and comprehensive personal prayer. Philippians 4:6-7

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

- E. Consciously give your worry, anxiety, and fear to God. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6-7
- F. Learn to commit situations to God early. Learn to recognize the symptoms of anxiety early and to deal with them early on. "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3
- G. Learn to live one day at a time. God has only promised the grace for today. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:33-34
- H. Put off worry and put on praise. Listen to praise music focusing on the glory and provision of God.
- I. Think and work through your problems using biblical principles to solve them. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 Tim. 3:16-17**
- J. Reinforce your will by a bond of accountability

The principle of accountability is one of the most powerful means to conquer temptation. If we tell ourselves we will do something, we have only ourselves to answer to. But if we tell someone else what we're going to do, we double our accountability.

If we are defeated by anger three times a week, this means we experience over one hundred fifty defeats a year. If in our first year of battle we reduce these defeats by half, we would be taking a major step toward freedom from anger. A program of action to accomplish this is making a covenant with a Christian friend. The covenant would be that whenever we face a time of temptation we would contact him and ask for special prayer. We will find that three major things happen:

First, the thought of telling him will be a powerful new motivation to resist the temptation.

Secondly, our need for prayer will be a powerful new motivation for him to be a more effective brother or sister in Christ.

And third, his prayers for us will be a powerful force for victory.

In this sense, your weakness will cause him to be stronger. There is no need to go into detail when we ask for prayer, but it is important to ask him

## OVERCOMING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND FEAR

to check later to see if his protective prayers were effective. In this way we fulfill James 5:16.

"Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

When we are faithful in following through on this covenant, a temptation to become anxious can be turned into a double victory--motivation to build Scripture into our lives and motivation to greater godliness for a fellow Christian.

K. Learn to live in the fear of God, which will result in:

Salvation (Psalm 85:9);

Wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7, 2:5; Isaiah 33:6);

Steadfastness (Psalm 112:7);

Improved health (Proverbs 3:7-8);

Prolonged life (Proverbs 10:27);

Vitality (fountain of life) (Proverbs 14:27);

God's goodness and lovingkindness toward you (Psalm 31:19; 103:11, 13, 17);

Eternal reward (Revelation 11:18);

God's watchfulness and protection over your life (Psalm 33:18-22; 34:7, 9);

Blessing from the Lord (Psalm 115:13);

Obedience and a motivation to serve Him (*Deuteronomy 10:12; II Corinthians 7:1*);

Satisfied sleep (Proverbs 19:23); and

Strong confidence (Proverbs 14:26).

L. For two weeks fill out a "Discovering Problem Patterns Worksheet." This will help you identify some specific aspects of your problem. This discovery will give us valuable information in dealing with your anxiety, worry, and fear.

M. Fill out a "Victory Over Failures Worksheet." This will help you begin to put a specific plan into effect to overcome your anxiety, worry, and fear.