

## Overcoming Sin (Part 5)

### Worry

Matthew 6:25-34

#### I. Introduction: 1, 2

- I. 3 Jesus teaches that His disciples are not to be characterized by worry and anxiety (Matt. 6:25: “...do not worry about your life...” KJV: “...take no thought for your life...” NASV: “...do not be anxious for your life...”
  - A. Nothing is wrong with thinking about the people and the things that are important in our life.
  - B. Concern, planning and preparation help us avoid making mistakes, it helps us avoid harming ourselves and our loved ones.
  - C. So there is nothing wrong with planning ahead or expressing concern:
    - (1) The wise man said: **Prov. 6:6-8:** “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest.”
    - (2) We have responsibilities that require our attention and concern: **I Tim. 5:8:** “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
2. So Jesus is not telling us it’s wrong to think about our responsibilities, to make plans for the future, or be concerned about our loved ones. To fail in this regard would be reckless, irresponsible and sinful.
3. Jesus is warning us against allowing these concerns to turn into anxiety and constant worrying.
4. The words “worry” and “anxious” are translated from the Greek word *merimna*, which Strong defines as “to be anxious about.” Thayer adds it is “to be troubled with cares,” while Vine says it means “to have a distracting care.” Webster’s Dictionary defines the English word “worry” as “to feel distressed in the mind, be anxious, troubled, or uneasy.”
5. The problem is when we go beyond thought, care and concern to distress and despair. When we stew about things beyond our control; even to the point of losing our appetite or having trouble sleeping.
  - A. \*\* Some are “chronic worriers,” or what we often call “worry warts.”
  - B. This is not the way God intends His children to live their lives.
  - C. In our text Jesus offers good reasons for Christians not to be overcome with anxiety and distress.
  - D. We must pay close attention to what the Bible teaches on this matter so we can overcome any tendency we might have to trouble ourselves with worries and cares.

#### II. Discussion:

##### I. 4 What’s wrong with worrying?

- A. \*\* **Worrying is a sin (Matt. 6:25, 31, 34:** 25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’” 34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”
  - (1) Three times in this passage Jesus specifically commands us not to worry, “do not worry.”
  - (2) Therefore, when we worry, we disregard a direct command of the Lord...that’s a sin!
  - (3) This command is just as important and binding as God’s prohibitions against lying, stealing, murder, adultery, blasphemy, etc.

**B. 5 Worrying shows a lack of faith in God (Matt 6:26, 28-30:** 26 “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **28-30:** “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”).

(1) Jesus plainly states the condition of a worrier: “O you of little faith?”

(2) We must have faith in order to be pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6).

(a) Thus worrying is an indication that our faith is lacking, faltering.

(b) We must trust Him to keep His promises (Recall the ancient Israelites?! Recall the unfaithful spies?!).

(c) If our Heavenly Father feeds the birds and clothes the grass, certainly we can trust Him to look out for our well-being! We are the pinnacle of creations! Gen. 1:26-27; **Matt. 7:9-11:** “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

(d) When we burden ourselves with worry we are essentially telling God we don’t think He is either capable or willing to keep His promise to care for us!

**C. 6 Worrying accomplishes nothing (Matt 6:27:** “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”).

(1) In fact, worrying is worse than just accomplishing nothing. Worrying is costly; it costs us emotionally, physically, and, most importantly, spiritually.

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.” —Leo Buscaglia

(2) Worrying is like sitting in a rocking chair; it gives us something to do, but it does not take you anywhere.

“It only seems as if you’re doing something when you worry.” —Lucy Maud Montgomery

(3) Nobody can add one good thing to his life by worrying about his life.

“If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today.” —E. Joseph Cossman

(4) Worry cannot add inches to our height or years to our life; in fact, the opposite is true: Worry impairs our health (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) and shortens our life.

**D. 7 Worrying is what the Gentiles do (Matt 6:31-32:** 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”).

(1) When we worry, we are living more like a heathen than like a child of God.

(a) Those without the Lord have good reasons to worry because they do not know or believe the Creator is watching out for them (my mother before she became a Christian; **1 Pet. 3:12:** “For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”).

(b) They are on their own (~30,000 suicides in the U.S. each year; for every successful suicide there are about 25 attempts; suicide is third leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds.).

- (2) Christians know we are not on our own; we have a Heavenly Father who watches out for us and takes care of us (**Rom. 8:31-39; Eph. 1:3, 15-23**).

**E. 8 Worrying distorts our priorities (Matt 6:33: 33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”).**

- (1) Many things are important in our lives: the welfare of our family and loved ones, our health, saving for retirement and old age, the future of our country, who wins the IU-UK game, etc.
- (2) However, “*our citizenship is in heaven*” (Phil. 4:20); therefore, nothing should be more important to us than the kingdom of God.
- (3) The time and energy we waste on worrying about the here and now is time and energy stolen from our pursuit of the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

**F. 9 Worrying is a thief (Matt 6:34: 34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”).**

- (1) Our English word “worry” is derived from an Old English word meaning “to strangle.”
- (a) Worrying does just that—it strangles our happiness and peace of mind out of us.
- (b) Worrying immobilizes us by unsettling our minds with real or imagined problems.
- (c) Satan uses worry to distract us, rob us of our time, mental energy, sleep, peace of mind, and joy.
- “A day of worry is more exhausting than a week of work.” —John Lubbock
- “Worry is the interest paid by those who borrow trouble.” —George Washington
- (d) However, this thief can only rob us if we cooperate!
- (2) Worry robs the Lord of our rightful service to Him.
- (a) Martha’s worry caused her to be distracted from what was really important (Lk. 10:38-42).
- (b) It robbed her of peace of mind and an opportunity to learn with her sister at Jesus’ feet (**v. 41**: “*Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.*”).
- (c) Where will the things we worry about “be” when we are in eternity?
- (3) The Lord warns us that “*the cares of this world*” chokes the word out of man’s heart, thus rendering the word void and a man unfruitful (**Matt. 13:22**: “*Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.*”).

**2. 10 How to Overcome Worry:** If a Christian has a problem with worrying they cannot afford to let it remain a part of their character. We cannot excuse sin in our life by saying, “Well, that’s just the way I am.” We can and must change, but it will require a conscious effort. What can we do to overcome the sin of worry?

**A. \*\* Increase our faith: Lk. 17:5: “And the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’”**

- (1) Worry is an indication of a lack, or weakness, of faith on our part, so we must “*increase our faith.*”
- (2) The best way is to read and meditate on God’s word (e.g., Rom. 10:17; Psalms when we were going through the adoption process)(**Psa. 119:11**: “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*”).
- (3) In essence, worry is a lack of trust in God’s ability to “have our back.”
- (a) What do we have to worry about if we believe God is both willing and able to care for us? Eph. 3:20; **Rom. 8:31-32**: “*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be*

against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

- (b) If He could create the Universe from nothing (Heb. 11:3) through the power of His word (Gen. 1:3, 6, 14: "Let there be..."), surely He can help me with the measly little problems I face in life.
- (c) We need to develop a real and deep trust in the God Who has proven, time and time again, His faithfulness and take comfort in His promises (1 Cor. 10:13; **2 Pet. 1:4**: "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."; **Phil. 4:19**: "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.").

**B. 11 Prayer: Jas. 5:16**: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

"The sovereign cure for worry is prayer." —William James

- (1) Remember King Hezekiah? The Assyrians had captured every city and town in Judea and were closing in on Jerusalem. The king of Assyria sends him a threatening letter which, in essence, was an ultimatum to surrender or else. What did Hezekiah do? **2 Kgs. 19:14-15**: "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15 Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD..."
- (2) The Lord granted Hezekiah and Jerusalem deliverance, not because of the king's military power, but because Hezekiah trusted in God to take care of the situation (**2 Kgs. 19:20**: "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.'"
- (3) Remember what Paul said sincere prayer would do for us?  
**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; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."  
Remember, this peace is only available after prayer!
- (4) Peter adds similar thoughts in **1 Pet. 5:7**: "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." But again, we must do something first! "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6). **Jas. 4:7-8**: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

**C. 12 Lean on a friend**

- (1) The Bible tells us of the value of friends, and perhaps there is no time when a friend is needed more than when we are struggling with troubles and cares.
- (2) Some people try to handle their problems alone, ashamed or too proud to ask others for help. But the Bible teaches we are to seek the help of friends during times of sorrow and suffering.  
**Prov. 17:17**: "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."  
**Eccl. 4:9-12**: "Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

- (3) The emotional weight of our problems is sometimes more of a burden than we can bear alone; that's why God has given us brethren of like precious faith" (**Gal. 6:2**: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.")
- (4) It's a big mistake NOT to confide in our brethren in such times of need; "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16)

#### D. **13 Learn to live one day at a time**

- (1) Recall the children of Israel in the wilderness. What was God teaching them as they collected manna each day? Certainly one lesson was to take life one day at a time.
- (2) Jesus teaches us to have this same daily dependence upon God (**Matt. 6:11**: "Give us this day our daily bread." **Matt. 6:34**: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.").
- (3) Will Rogers: "Worrying is like paying on a debt that may never come due."
- (4) Today is not an opportunity to recall yesterday's failures or to worry about tomorrow's problems. It is a day to rejoice and be glad! **Psa. 118:24**: "This is a day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

"My life has been full of terrible misfortunes most of which never happened." —Michel de Montaigne

**Phil. 3:13-14**: "...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

#### E. **14 Do the right thing**

- (1) Only those who have done evil and have told lies have to worry about what they've said and what they've done (**1 Pet. 3:12**: "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.").
- (2) If we do what is right and do it to the best of our ability, we have no reason to worry (**Acts 24:16**: "...I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."). A clean conscience relieves us from the stress of worry.
- (3) Worry also sometimes arise because we have failed to prepare; so if we live responsibly, fulfilling our obligations in a timely manner to the best of our ability, we will not have any reasons to worry (7<sup>th</sup> grade math project).

#### F. **15 Learn to be content**

- (1) It was something Paul had to learn:  
**Phil. 4:11-13**: "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
- (2) Some people worry about things that are only very remote possibilities: losing their job, losing their health, losing their loved ones, etc. (Doomsday Preppers).
- (3) We need to learn to enjoy what we have while we have it!
  - (a) Learn to make the best of any situation in which we find ourselves.
  - (b) We need to remember that when things seem the worst, we are actually being given a great opportunity to allow the Lord to help us! **Phil. 4:13**
- (4) We can always strive to improve our situation, but this cannot be accomplished through worry.

- (a) We can change some things in our lives, but some things are beyond our control.
- (b) As one wise man said, “What cannot be cured has got to be endured.”

#### G. **16 Remember we cannot control other people**

- (1) Some people worry about other people—what they will or won’t do.
  - (a) It’s true that we are responsible for others (parents for children, children for parents, employers for employees, employees for employers, etc.).
  - (b) All of us responsible for the example we set for others (Matt. 5:13-16).
- (2) However, we also need to remind ourselves that we cannot control other people.
  - (a) Despite good advice in the end people make their own decisions, and, sometimes, suffer the consequences of those decisions.
  - (b) This can be especially hard for parents worrying about their children.
  - (c) We need to love our children and do our best to guide them into the right path, but ultimately they will make their own decisions in their lives and it is totally beyond our control.
  - (d) Our worrying about it will not do us one bit of good.

#### III. **17 Conclusion:**

- 1. Few people are immune to the temptation of worry.
- 2. But Jesus tells us worrying is wrong: “...*do not worry about your life...*” (Matt. 6:25)
  - A. Worrying is a characteristic of the godless, not of the Christian (Matt. 6:32).
  - B. Worrying is a sin, it betrays a lack of trust, a weakness of faith.
  - C. Worry does not belong in the heart of a child of God.
  - D. Quite to the contrary, a child of God’s heart is characterized by joy and peace:
 

**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; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*”
- 3. Let’s all work on eliminating worry from our lives; the Lord will help us!

Adapted from *Overcoming Sin*, by Heath Rogers, 2013, One Stone Press, Bowling Green, KY (pp. 47-50).