

Biblical Counseling Training Institute
Subject: Worry/Anxiety/Fear
Instructor: Dr. Marc A. Graham
Asst. Pastor
Calvary Bible Church, Ann Arbor, MI.

Introduction:

- A. Worry and anxiety are driven by fear.

- B. What worry is not:
 - 1. Worry is not proper care and concern that causes you to attend to business in a responsible way.
 - a. 2 Cor. 11:28.
 - b. Phil. 2:20.
 - c. Gal. 4:19.

 - 2. Worry is not right planning.
 - a. James 4:13.

- C. What worry is:
 - 1. Worry is over-anxious concern about the future and things.
(Matt. 6:25).

 - 2. The word used for “worry” in the Greek text stresses the action effects of worry (to divide, part, rip, tear apart, be anxious, distract your attention).
 - a. Matt. 12:25.
 - b. Mark 6:41.
 - c. Mark 4:19.

 - 3. Concern becomes worry and therefore sin when:
 - a. Thoughts are focused on changing the future.
 - b. It controls you instead of you controlling it.
 - c. It causes you to neglect other responsibilities and relationships.
 - d. It damages your body.
 - e. You lose hope instead of finding answers.
 - f. You stop functioning. (debilitating panic attacks).

I. Why is worry wrong? – Matt. 6:21-34.

A. It is unproductive.

1. It accomplishes nothing. Nothing changes. Matt. 6:27.
2. It is a thief of time. Matt. 6:34.
3. It controls your mind.
4. It blurs your vision. Matt. 6:22-23.
5. It wastes energy.
6. It damages the body.
7. Worrier usually stops functioning in many areas of life.
8. Worry is actually laziness. Matt. 25:14-30.

B. It is unnecessary.

1. God is able and trustworthy. Matt. 6:28-30.
2. He is concerned about and committed to caring for the needs of His children. Matt. 6:26; 10:28-30.
3. Worry is, thus, unbelief.

C. It is unbecoming a believer.

1. It is thinking and acting like an unbeliever. Matt. 6:32.
2. It focuses on what one does not have. Matt. 6:31.
3. Focuses on the earthly rather than the eternal. Matt. 6:25.
4. Focuses on gifts, not giver.
5. Have no hope.
6. Worry is thus idolatry.

D. Observations:

1. Basic focus of worry is my concern for tomorrow and a temporal

value system.

- a. Anger: focus on my way or opinion.
- b. Fear: focus on my loss or hurt.

2. Focus of life is wrong (Matt. 6:25) because:

- a. Fear views life through the eyes of loss or hurt rather than through the lens of Biblical truth. (2 Cor. 10:5).
- b. Fear seeks to control everyone and everything around it to try to avoid further loss or hurt. Thus, fear has great difficulty yielding control to God. (Matt. 6:33-34).
- c. Fear is, at the root, a heart problem, because at the root of fear is a lack of trust of others, including God.
(Prov. 3:5-6).
- d. Because of this, fear does not develop meaningful relationships. Fear is the opposite of love and trust.
(1 John 4:18; 2 Tim. 1:7).
- e. Fear is essential selfish. It is preoccupied with concerns of self rather than others.
- f. Fear keeps one from serving God to the fullest. It is more concerned about the dangers and problems of life and the opinions of others than it is about pleasing God.

II. Fear/Anxiety/Worry can be brought on by Perfectionism.

A. The Perfectionist is tormented by the possibility of failure.

B. God is not concerned about Perfection, but about progressive sanctification.

C. Perfectionists must consider the following:

1. Is the standard I am concerned about something that will really matter in eternity. (Col. 2:20-3:4).
2. Are the standards/commands I am concerned about found in Scripture? Or am I adding to/twisting Scripture? (Matt. 15:1-9).
3. Do I believe that I must obey this standard in order to please God? (1 Thess. 4:1).
4. Does the project or the way I think it should be completed mean more to me than the people involved? (Phil. 2:2-5).

5. Do I feel guilty when I relax?
6. Do I understand that all Christians, including me, are in a state of growing and changing? (Phil. 3:12-13; James 2:8-16).
7. Do I tend to get discouraged and give up when things don't go as think they should? Do I understand what it means to persevere in face of failure? (James 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-8).
8. What is my ultimate goal in life? God's glory or my own? (1 Cor. 10: 31; Phil. 1:20).

III. How to get rid of fear/worry/anxiety.

A. Wrong ways:

1. Minimize fears.
2. Pious wishing.
3. Our own effort.
4. Activity as a diversion from fear/worry.
5. Talk about it.
6. Wrong praying.

B. Right ways:

1. Right praying. (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - a. Recognize and confess worry as sin.
 - b. Thank God for His promised provision and His work in trials and problems.
 - c. Specific, not general requests.
 - d. Right praying leads to-----
2. Right thinking. (Phil. 4:8).
 - a. Develop a think list.
 - b. Biblical planning. (James 4:13-16).
 - c. Find Biblical solutions to problems.
 - d. Right praying and right thinking leads to-----

3. Right actions. (Phil. 4:9).

a. Redirect energy.

b. 1 Cor. 10:13.

c. Putting on right praying, thinking, actions---putting off worry (Eph. 4:22-24).

IV. Not all fear is wrong.

A. God gave us our emotions and a right use of them is not sinful.

B. A healthy respect for danger is wise. (Psalm 64:1).

1. As a protection device, fear is a good thing.

2. As a preoccupation fear is sin. It is a lack of trust in God.

a. Many move from city to city, job to job out of fear and insecurity.

b. Some people will not travel by air.

c. Some lock themselves in houses like a prison.

d. Some neglect to get medical care out of fear of bad news.

e. Many are paralyzed by panic attacks.

V. The ultimate answer to sinful fear is to understand what the Bible teaches about the sovereignty of God.

A. We will live our lives based upon Who we believe our God to be.

B. Sinful fear results when God, Himself, is not properly feared and respected (Prov. 1:7).

1. Many fear man more than God. (Matt. 10:28-29).

2. Fear of things we cannot change keeps us from functioning in things we can change.

C. Proper fear/respect for God can be developed through studies of His sovereign control in stories such as that of Joseph (Gen. 37-50).

D. Through the stories of both Joseph and Job, counselees may be brought to understand the important theological principle of concurrency.

1. Concurrency means that it is possible for more than one party to be involved in the same event at the same time, yet each party may have a different purpose and goal in that event.

2. Example: Job 1. Who are the parties involved?
- a. **The Chaldeans** (Job 1:17). What was their goal? To get rich quick by stealing Job's cattle. Their purpose was evil.
 - b. **Satan**. (Job 1:6-12). What was his goal? To cause Job to suffer to the point that he would respond by sinning against God, thereby discrediting God and His program. His purpose was evil.
 - c. **God**. What was his goal? To glorify His name through the steadfastness of His servant, Job, in the midst of terrible trial. His purpose was good.
3. When counselees understand the principle of concurrence, they will see the greatness of God, through His ability to bring good and glory through trials, even when they involve people whose desire is to do evil against us.

VI. Fear/Worry/Anxiety can be overcome in the power of Christ. Others have. You must.

NOTE: Some of the material in this outline has been adapted from workshop on Worry and Fear that is a part of the Counseling Training program of the Faith Baptist Counseling Ministries, Lafayette, Indiana.