

#45 “Worthless Worrying”

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Worrying can seem like a prison from which we cannot escape, but there is a way out. We must come to understand, admit, accept, and believe that worrying does no good. It accomplishes nothing for us or for anybody else. Worrying is completely useless. Jesus says in Luke 12:25, “And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span?” Worrying certainly doesn’t add value to life or lengthen it. If anything, it diminishes the quality of life and quite possibly its duration because of added stress on our bodies. Worrying is destructive, ineffective, and unnecessary.

There is an underlying assumption by those who worry that they have at least some level of control over their circumstances which, in reality, only God has ultimate control over. There is something inside of them that knows that they are not in control and that they cannot control all that happens in their lives, but they sure want to be able to be in total control. They want to know, fully understand, and control all that is going on, that has gone on, and that will go on. They effectively want to usurp God’s position as sovereign, all-powerful, and all-knowing. It is not that they are seeking to replace God, for even this would worry them. But it is that they are struggling to abandon themselves and those whom they care about to God’s control. God is in control, and He does care. But those who worry struggle to believe that and appropriate it. Those who worry tend to mistrust God and have an overly-inflated view of their own ability to make their lives what they want them to be.

To surrender to God does not mean that we submit to fate as if we have no responsibility or choices to make in life. Many times our own difficulties are a result of our own making and irresponsible behavior. We can further muddy the already muddied water from our worrying by not doing our part to make wise choices and to be proactive in seeking God’s will, doing what He has already revealed for us to do. Life takes labor, work, effort, strain, and energy. Sometimes those who worry get imprisoned, in effect, by their worry because they stop taking steps of action, maybe because they are too worried. Thus, worry can be a downward spiral of self-imprisonment, leading to a sort of paralysis of the will and mind, resulting in spiritual ineffectiveness, inward destruction, and despair. So we must not worsen matters by not doing what God has already instructed us to do. We are not helpless beings, and we do have a will and a responsibility to act.

The long term and full fix for worry does go beyond merely taking steps of obedience and action. For some, they won’t even be able to do this because they are so bound up by worry. Others might find some release from worry for a time, only to fall back into it when they have to face another difficult set of circumstances. Thus, it is important to seek the foundation of the problem in order to find lasting freedom. First, we must recognize that apart from Christ, we can do nothing (John 15:5). We are not adequate in and of ourselves no matter how much we might think we are or how much we want to be. We

have no adequacy or sufficiency apart from Christ in us (2 Corinthians 3:5). Jesus says in Luke 12:26, in relation to the futility of our worrying, "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?" So the first thing we must believe and acknowledge is that we need God, and we have no hope unless we cast ourselves upon His care. It is not just that we can do some things and need His help to do the rest or that we do part and He does part. No, we need Him to do it all. We can't do anything. Thus, things are outside of our power and control ultimately, and we need to rest upon God Who is sufficient, powerful, and able. Second, we must rest not only in our God who is powerful and able but in our God Who is perfectly and totally loving. He is worthy of our trust because He loves us so much that He even gave us His only begotten Son Whom we didn't deserve, seek, or even ask for. God delights in giving good gifts to His children (Matthew 7:11), and every good and perfect gift is from Him (James 1:17). He works all things for our good (Romans 8:28). This is not a God Who is out to be unfair toward us, unloving, unjust, or evil. God has no evil intent, He does not tempt, and He cannot do us wrong. All that happens to us is necessarily kindest, wisest, and best. Thus, we can rest in God because He is not cruel, vindictive, or malicious. He is good, and His gifts are as well. Third, we must be willing to trust God even when we cannot see or understand what is going on or why. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." There will be times when life's circumstances will seem to indicate that God is absent or that He doesn't really care. We cannot conclude these things, but we must choose to walk by faith. If He gave us His Son, won't He freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)? God gave us Christ, and He is not going to hold back His love to us now. We must remember the cross when we are tempted to start worrying again.

The road to freedom from worry is to trust God, to rest in His love, and to truly believe that He is able and that we are not. Will we let God take the controls of our lives today, knowing and believing that He can do it better than we can? Will we trust Him that He will only do us good all of the days of our lives (Psalm 23:6)? May God take all our worries away as we cast our anxieties upon Him (1 Peter 5:7).