

I'm Worried All the Time

Series: It's Somewhere: Looking for Answers

Luke 12:22-34

May 21, 2017

I had something interesting happen to me this week. I was browsing the internet when I found an article with a headline interested me. I clicked on it, began to read, then something back at the top of the site caught my eye. The article was written by someone I know, a parent of a teenager I had in my youth group when I was serving in Macon, Georgia 30 years ago.

Seeing his name prompted me to open a memory box – not a literal box – but a box like these we're using for our "It's Somewhere: Looking for Answers" series. It was the box labeled "Caroline."

CAROLINE WORRIED ABOUT THE STOCK MARKET.

How often do we look back on the situations where we were really worried about something, only to find out in the immediate and after the passage of time that we had nothing to worry about? It was pointless to worry and it amounted to nothing.

Yet worry seems to be a common thing among lots of people.

I came across a survey of 2,000 people taken a couple of years ago. It found that the Top 20 things people worry about are:

20. Worried about the area I live in/ crime levels.
19. Pet's health.
18. If my dress sense is good.
17. Meeting work targets or goals.
16. Whether I'm a good parent/ raising kids right.
15. A friend or family member I've fallen out with.
14. Whether I'll find the right partner/ whether my current partner is right.
13. Whether my partner still loves me.
12. Whether or not I am attractive.
11. I need to find a new job.
10. I seem to be generally unhappy.
9. Paying rent/mortgage.
8. Worried about my physique.
7. Wrinkles or ageing appearance.
6. Job security.
5. Financial/credit card debts.
4. My diet.
3. Low energy levels.
2. Worried about my savings/ financial future.
1. Getting old in general.¹

The same survey also found 42% of people are unhappy with their lives. No wonder. They're worrying about a lot of stuff.

As a result, there are a lot of suggestions for getting rid of worry.

¹ <https://www.indy100.com/article/the-20-things-people-worry-about-the-most--xJVjF0DSox>

Someone once said, "Life is too short to worry about anything. You had better enjoy it because the next day promises nothing." Wow, that doesn't help much; now I'm worried if I will be alive tomorrow.

Someone else said, "My dog doesn't worry about the meaning of life. She may worry if she doesn't get her breakfast, but she doesn't sit around worrying about whether she will get fulfilled or liberated or enlightened. As long as she gets some food and a little attention, her life is fine."

EINSTEIN QUOTE.

Henry Ford said of worry, "I believe God is managing affairs and that He doesn't need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about?"

He's got it right. If God is in charge, why worry?

Oh, maybe that's why we worry so much; God's not in charge, at least in our minds.

I think we need to see what Jesus has to say about worry.

Turn to page 7 in your bulletin and follow along as I read from Luke 12:22-34:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*²

Jesus tells us 3 things about worry here.

First, the Character of Worry.

Look at 22:

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...*³

Stop there. The word here is typically translated worry or be anxious. In the Greek, it means to be divided. The Greek word is formed by two root words "divided" and "mind." Worry is a divided mind. So when the Kings James Version translators saw that word, they didn't translate it "worry" or "be anxious." Here how they translated it:

*Take no thought for your life...*⁴

² Luke 12:22-34 (NIV)

³ Luke 12:22a (NIV)

⁴ Luke 12:22a (KJV)

And while it is not an accurate translation, it is accurate in real life. For you see, a lot of worry is just that: thought. Nothing concrete, nothing real, just “what ifs,” imagination, all in your head.

Jesus says, “Take no thought.” That is the character of worry; it is all thought, and not much reality.

Second, the Condemning of Worry.

The majority of the rest of this passage is given to the condemning of worry, which means Christ strongly condemns the popular habit of worrying.

Look at the passage again:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.⁵

Food and clothes are big business in America. A man’s gotta eat, and a woman’s gotta shop. Food commercials stimulate your hunger centers and trigger a desire to eat. Then there’s the commercial I’m seeing now from EBay clothing. A woman sees another woman in a pretty dress walk by, and the first woman immediately uses her smartphone to order that dress. Then you see the first woman walk into a crowded room, and another woman sees her shoes, and what does she do? Orders those shoes. This third woman is then seen entering the office, and a fourth woman sees the third woman’s purse, and you guessed it, orders the purse. All from EBay clothing. I don’t get it; it looks like passing the flu to me, but I’m sure you women out there think I’m an idiot.

Food and clothes are big, but they are also a major area of concern in everyday life and often cause much worry.

Jesus gave some good reasons for condemning worry.

First, the fleshiness of worry.

Verse 23:

Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.⁶

Worry concerns itself chiefly with things of the flesh, especially food and clothes. Seldom do people “worry” about spiritual matters. Those who are focused the most on the fleshly side of life will have the most problems with worry.

Second, the food of worry.

Verse 24:

Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!⁷

⁵ Luke 12:22-30 (NIV)

⁶ Luke 12:23 (NIV)

⁷ Luke 12:24 (NIV)

God feeds the birds of the air, but a human is better (in spite of the animal rights' people's thinking) than animals, and therefore will get better care from God.

Third, the futility of worry.

Verse 25:

*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*⁸

Worry cannot add even an hour to our lives, which says that worry does not solve problems.

Fourth, the flowers of worry.

Verses 27-28:

*Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you...*⁹

Much worry is about outward stuff. It is needless worry, for God clothes the flowers with better material than Solomon's robes, and we are better than flowers.

Fifth, the faithlessness of worry.

Look at the end of verse 28:

*O you of little faith!*¹⁰

Worry is condemned because it is not of faith. Worry reflects a lack of faith. Worry about earthly cares, such as food and clothes, is a product of unbelief.

The third and final thing Jesus gives us in this passage is the Cure for Worry.

Verse 31:

*But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*¹¹

So there is a cure for worry. But many do not like the cure, for it requires that which they do not want to do.

The cure is found in seeking. "Seek his kingdom." Matthew 6:33 adds the all-important "first" to the seeking.

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*¹²

Instead of being concerned about worldly cares, we need to be concerned about spiritual matters. That will cure our temporal worries.

And when we seek, we are tapping into the supply in the cure.

*these things will be given to you as well.*¹³

All the things that are really important will be supplied by God if we seek.

I want you to fill in the next sentence and ponder it:

The reward for seeking the right thing is the supply of all the needs you were worried about.

⁸ Luke 12:25 (NIV)

⁹ Luke 12:27-28 (NIV)

¹⁰ Luke 12:28 (NIV)

¹¹ Luke 12:31 (NIV)

¹² Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

¹³ Luke 12:31b (NIV)

Worry will not supply the needs, but seeking the kingdom of God will. It is a great promise, yet few take this medicine and instead worry about all their fleshly needs, and in the process, hurt their spiritual life.¹⁴

At the end of WWII, the Japanese government faced a problem. Although the treaty with the Allies had been signed and the war was over, thousands of Japanese soldiers living in the mountains and jungles of the South Pacific islands would not come out of hiding, surrender their weapons, and return to their homes to live in peace. These soldiers had been so indoctrinated with stories of what the Americans would do to them if they surrendered that they believed they would face certain torture or immediate death, so they remained in hiding and ready to fight.

How could the Japanese government convince these die hard warriors that the war was indeed over and they were not just hearing American propaganda designed to capture unsuspecting soldiers?

Finally, Japanese Emperor Hirohito made a speech detailing the end of the war and pleading with them to return home. The voice of the Emperor was broadcast by radio and recorded to be repeatedly played on loudspeakers directed into the jungles and mountain caves where these men were hiding. One by one, the Japanese soldiers accepted the assurance of their Emperor and turned themselves in. Some waited to be certain the war had indeed ended, but within a few months all but a few had surrendered.

After some years, it was assumed all of these hidden soldiers had been accounted for; those still missing were presumed dead. However, in March of 1974, a Japanese soldier finally came out of hiding, 29 years after the war was over. When asked why he had remained in hiding so long, this warrior, now in his 60s, said it had taken him that long to get over his fears.

The U.S. and Japan had shared a friendly relationship for years, but this lone soldier had wasted 29 years hiding from an enemy he still feared within his mind.¹⁵

Can you imagine being held captive by your fears and worry for 29 years? Imprisoned, not by an invading army, not by a cruel dictator, but held captive by the fear and worry within your mind. Some of you are. Isn't it time to be free? Isn't it time to find the cure? Isn't it time to

“...seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor, Luke 12:22-34

¹⁵ From “Healing of Memories”, David Seamands

¹⁶ Luke 12:31 (NIV)